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ABSTRACT

In its enabling legislation, the Alaska Joint Committee on School Performance was instructed to identify and recommend those subjects for priority legislative attention that might lead to improved school performance. The Committee's study found that inadequate school performance can be attributed to the following needs: (1) stricter school district accountability; (2) encouragement of greater local participation in school affairs at the community or building the level; (3) interagency coordination of services, funding equity, equal opportunity, professional development, and school district organization. Recommendations are made in the areas of accountability; incentive grants and local participation; health and family services programs; early childhood and parenting education; school finance and governance; professional development; program definition and curricula; and research, evaluation, and dissemination. Two tables, six figures, and a separate executive summary are included. Appendices contain the first report of the committee, "Excellence in School Performance," (January 1990), state outcomes and standards for student performance, the CS House Bill 470, state statutes and the public school foundation program, property tax law, the Alaska Association of School Administrators education foundation funding proposal, a review of education legislation in other states, and an essay by the director of the Senate's special committee on school performance. (32 references) (LMI)

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New Directives in School Performance:

The Legislature as Advocate and Guarantor

REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

To The
Seventeenth Alaska Legislature

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JUNEAU, ALASKA
JANUARY 1991

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NEW DIRECTIVES IN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE:

THE LEGISLATURE AS ADVOCATE AND GUARANTOR

:::::

REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE
ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

TO THE
SEVENTEENTH ALASKA LEGISLATURE

JUNEAU, ALASKA
JANUARY 1991

Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition to the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for late professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION, 1954

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the course of the work required to carry out the task the legislature entrusted to the Joint Committee on School Performance much assistance and many ideas have been proffered by a broad cross-section of Alaskans. Although it is not practical to list all by name, there are a few groups that should not go unrecognized.

Essential among all who have contributed are the many citizens from all walks of life who, either through formal hearings or casual contact, have made their concerns and suggestions known. As much as any source, it has been the public at large that has brought out the need for the legislature to advocate and guarantee improved school performance.

Among the various groups that have contributed to the work this report summarizes, the following are noted with special thanks: The State Board of Education, The Department of Education, the Alaska Congress of Parents and Teachers, The Alaska Council of School Administrators, the Association of Alaska School Boards, NEA-Alaska, and the University of Alaska.

Graphics for the report were prepared by the Department of Education's Foundation Program Office in the Division of Educational Finance and Support Services and by the Legislative Research Agency.

Finally, thanks are due Dr. Arthur Petersen, Associate Professor, University of Alaska Southeast for his able editorial review of the draft manuscript.

INTRODUCTION

In its enabling legislation, the Joint Committee on School Performance was instructed to identify and recommend those subjects for priority legislative attention that might lead to improved school performance. As herewith reported, the Committee has accomplished this task. However, from the outset of its work, the Committee was beset with a dilemma. Charged with proposing the means to bring about improved levels of education among all pupils of the state, the Committee soon recognized that because of certain circumstances in some areas, some schools consistently have not served students well; under different circumstances elsewhere, however, other schools have helped students perform at acceptable or better than average levels of academic achievement. (Chapter One describes the extent and nature of this disparity.). The general dilemma, in other words, is that there is no single way to approach or describe the work necessary to help all Alaska students improve their academic performance.

This dilemma can be illustrated by some of the differences encountered in the schools: Performance indicators among schools are high in some places and low in others, but the nature of the various schools do not clearly reveal the causes of high and low scores. Still, some causes are clear enough: there are great geographic, economic, historical, and cultural differences among Alaska's fifty-four school districts, making them inherently different. Furthermore, of the problems the Committee identified, not all are of the same level of severity. With no uniform school system or homogeneous school age population, diverse and disparate are the words that best describes Alaska's school system. Consequently, the Committee has designed its recommendations to address

Alaska's differences in general, but with greater emphasis on issues affecting those students with the greatest needs because their needs are so dramatically significant. These are the students often referred to as being "at risk"--the students who will not complete twelve years of adequate schooling or who will be unable to realize their intellectual or social potential, regardless of the number of years completed.

Much of the current debate about the ways to improve school performance stems from action taken by the legislature when it mandated statewide standardized testing of Alaska's students three years ago. Although sometimes used to compare one district with another or levels of teacher competency, the testing program was not intended to be applied that way. Standardized achievement tests are analytical tools that may be used to identify what specific areas of knowledge and/or learning processes need greater effort or reiteration for a given child, class, or school. When ordered by the legislature, the primary purpose of standardized tests was seen as a way to establish performance benchmarks on an intra district basis so that increases or decreases in the scores of individual schools could be monitored from within each district. In this way it would be known at the local level when to take measures to encourage, support, and expand programs when they are found to be successful and when to take corrective measures when they are not.

This purpose notwithstanding, the ensuing debate over the reliability of national standardized tests as measures of student achievement, especially as applied to Alaska's multicultural population, has not gone unnoticed by the Joint Committee. Use of nationally normed, standardized tests is only one of several ways to measure school performance. As recently declared by the National Commission on Testing and Public Policy,

> Test Scores are imperfect measures and should not be used alone to make important decisions about individuals, groups, or institutions; in the allocation of opportunities, individuals' past performance and relevant experience must be considered. The more test scores disproportionately deny opportunities to minorities, the greater the need to show that the tests measure characteristics relevant to the opportunities being allocated.[2]

Regardless of how well standardized tests are perceived as an accurate measure of today's school performance, it has been noted by the Joint Committee, as it was by the Special Senate Committee on School Performance, that there has been a general loss of public confidence in many aspects of schooling today. The 1990 National Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools revealed that not many people believe the current wave of school reform has been successful. And when asked the question, "What grade would you give the public schools nationally...?" only 21% said "A" or "B," and of these only 2% said "A." [3] Judging by the tone of lay and professional testimony heard by the Committee, an exclusively Alaskan poll would not reveal a more positive attitude.

In the first report of the Committee, "Excellence in School Performance: The Role of the Legislature" (attached as appendix A), there is a section on the role of the legislature in improving school performance, thus the title of that report. There the unmistakable responsibility of the legislature for the ultimate state of the education of Alaskans is stressed. There also, the goals of the Joint Committee and its first six recommendations are described in detail. "New Directives in School Performance: The Legislature as Advocate and Guarantor"--the title of this second and final report of the Joint Committee on School Performance is intended to convey, in a general sense, a notion of the work that now should follow.

In this report the words "advocate"' and "guarantor" in the title qualify the nature of the legislature's responsibility. The constitutional mandate to "establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all the children of the State..." falls upon members of the legislature; they have the responsibility to advocate educational opportunity on behalf of the children of their constituents. Furthermore, as stewards of the public's funds, legislators have the authority and responsibility to guarantee an equitable system of allocating funds sufficient to carry out the programs that legislators advocate, so that every child in Alaska can develop to their fullest potential.

However, because of the complexity and the massiveness of the education enterprise, there is much in the process of maintaining a system of public schools that is beyond the range of the legislature and boards of education. Although that operation must be guided by policies promulgated by the legislature, the state board of education, and local boards, each with their own measure of authority, the everyday operation of schools must be left to teachers and administrators. With this concept in mind and recognizing that not all school districts have the same needs, the Committee has been careful to limit its deliberations and recommendations to broad policy issues, leaving to the professional community the responsibility for determining the means to carry them out.

The Joint Committee was established on the grounds that there is widespread public concern for the condition of school performance in Alaska. Since the Committee was activated in August, 1989, arguments advanced for its creation and the need for the legislature to assert itself in public schooling have become even more persuasive. The overall level of educational achievement of many Alaska students as measured on standardized tests and other school performance indicators is simply unacceptable, Reports of school performance indicators for 1990 show continuing decline

from previous years. If Alaska is expected to prosper in the future this trend must be reversed. Accordingly, it is with a sense of urgency that this report is submitted for consideration by the Seventeenth Alaska State Legislature.

CHAPTER ONE

THE COMMITTEE'S FIRST REPORT REVIEWED:

OUTCOMES AND CONCEPTS CARRIED FORWARD

Ultimate responsibility for schooling in Alaska resides in the legislature, a given that was emphasized and described in the opening chapter of the Joint Committee's first report. This responsibility needed emphasizing because legislation several years ago set the tone for concentrated control of education at the local district and REAA level. The result has been to detach involvement of government at the state level. It became clear, however, that the problems of inadequate school performance could not be delegated entirely to local authorities nor ignored by the legislature. This perception led to the publication of the Department of Education's "Basic Skills Performance of Alaska's Students" in 1988 and the Senate's "Helping Schools Succeed at Helping All Children Learn" in early 1989. It became the responsibility of the Joint Committee on School Performance to identify problem areas and recommend measures that would adjust the balance in local-state authority as well as to propose alternative means that might lead to improved school performance. Thus, with publication of the Joint Committee's first report, a more active legislative presence in school performance reform through both oversight and initiative was affirmed.

At the beginning of the last session, three bills that addressed five of the six recommendations made by the Joint Committee in the first report were introduced. Of the five recommendations contained in these bills, four were favorably acted

on, three in their entirety and one partially. A sixth recommendation concerned increasing an appropriation for early childhood education, already under consideration by the legislature. The appropriation was increased markedly, although not to the full extent requested, through a letter from the Joint Committee to the finance committees of both houses. Looked at collectively, the first report enjoyed strong support which is generally believed to be having a positive influence on school performance.

SCHOOL DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY

The most substantial legislation introduced by the Joint Committee last year and enacted by the legislature was HB 469, now codified as Chapter 173. Titled "An Act establishing a state education policy: relating to powers and duties of school districts, the Department of Education, and the State Board of Education with respect to education planning, grants for the improvement of school performance, etc.," it addresses purposes and goals of schooling, school district accountability, and incentives to overcome schooling deficiencies. A survey of the agencies that have been responsible for schooling over the years reveals that there have been many statements on the purposes and goals of education. Church missions (under contract to the U.S. Department of Interior), the U.S. Bureau of Education, the Territorial Department of Education, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the State Department of Education, the Alaska State Operated School System, the Alaska Unorganized Borough School District, the numerous independent, city, and borough school districts, and the Regional Education Attendance Areas (REAAs) all declared goals, often banal, for the education of Alaskans. But now, for the first time, there is a statement that defines the purposes of schooling at the legislative level. Chapter 173 declares:

> It is the policy of this state that the purpose of education is to help ensure that all students will succeed in their education and work, shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves, exemplify the best values of society, and be effective in improving the character and quality of the world about them.

It would be difficult to rewrite this statement in broader or more flexible language. It is the antithesis of the policies of the federal and territorial government of fifty years ago that called for a uniform and rigidly specific curriculum for all schools alike, regardless of cultural and linguistic considerations necessary for sound schooling practices.

In addition to characterizing statewide purposes of education, the new statute also mandates that the State Board of Education set in regulation a list of expected outcomes of education. This the State Board did on October 19, 1990. The Board's "outcomes of schooling" identify societal needs, at both state and community levels, that only an educated populace can fulfill. The Board has specified that each student graduating from public school will communicate effectively, think logically and critically, discover and nurture creative talents, master technological skills, be a responsive citizen, be committed to health and fitness, accept personal responsibility for sustaining oneself economically, and have positive self-esteem. (The complete regulation, containing several subareas, is attached as Appendix B.)

Furthermore, Chapter 173 requires

1. That school districts:

   establish district goals and priorities for improving student performance.

   include a plan for achieving district goals and priorities.

include means to measure the achievement of district goals and priorities.

encourage students, parents, teachers, and other members of the community to participate in the preparation of the report.

annually file an education planning report with the Department of Education and make it available to the public.

2. That an annual school district "report card" shall:

be developed by the State Board of Education in consultation with appropriate representatives from the education profession, local school boards, and citizens at large.

account for the school's and students' performance for that year.

be presented to parents, students, and community members at a public meeting.

be forwarded to the Commissioner ofEducation.

3. That the report shall contain, but is not limited to

the percentage of students in the top and bottom quarter of national achievement examinations.

the percent of students who are promoted to the next grade.

the comments of students, parents, and community members on school performance.

the annual percentage of change in enrollment and the percentage of enrollment change due to student transfers.

the ways in which meaningful parent involvement in schools was achieved.

the extent to which State Board of Education outcomes of schooling have been achieved.

other indicators of school performance selected by the district.

4. That the Department of Education shall:

prepare a summary of district report cards in a manner that allows school performance to be measured against state and district goals established in prior years.

submit its report to the public, the legislature, and the public at large.

Several parts of the act require the participation of parents and teachers in school planning. The act responds to the oft-repeated position of many who have testified at the community level: namely that there is a need to empower parents, teachers, and principals to make programmatic decisions in a more substantial way than in the past.

Compliance with the statute is proceeding on schedule. The Department of Education has developed (in cooperation with local community groups, school boards, and school administrators) a time table to put the school district "report card" plan into effect. The Alaska Coalition for Education, consisting of the state's major education, professional, and lay groups, including the State Board of Education, has made compliance with the new "accountability" law its first priority.

In short, the state now requires by statute that districts provide (1) programs that fulfill the needs of society at large, (2) outcomes of schooling that satisfy the broad needs of individuals as stipulated through State Board regulation, and (3) programs that encourage accommodation of needs peculiar to each Alaska community due to its unique cultural and economic circumstances.

INCENTIVE GRANTS: A MODEST SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS OF "STUDENTS AT RISK"

The incentive grant program, as recommended in the Joint Committee's first report, now established in Chapter 173, came to be know as the Fund for the Improvement of School Performance. Creation of the Fund is intended to restore confidence in the potential of parent groups, teachers, and principals to make a positive difference in school performance. In short, the Fund encourages parent and teacher empowerment; it sends the message that those working at the top of the political pyramid care and are trying to do something positive about poor student performance. It is unique in that it is not categorically specific and that it allows teachers and lay members of the community equal standing as applicants. The primary criterion by which applications are to be judged is whether the proposed activity can be shown to have the potential to improve schooling.

Reasons in the first report for supporting the Fund remain as valid now, if not more so, as they did a year ago. For example, in a Department of Education report to the legislature in January, 1990, it was shown that the number of pupils that the schools were not serving adequately had continued to increase, alarmingly so among some segments of the population. In its report to the legislature in January, 1990, DOE pointed out that

> Based on the last census, approximately one in seven Alaskans (approximately 72,000) is functionally illiterate in English.
>
> An estimated 30% of freshmen entering Alaska's high schools do not graduate. In urban areas, in excess of 60% of Native freshmen do not graduate.
>
> Twenty of Alaska's 54 school districts scored on average below the 22nd percentile in either reading, mathematics, or language arts at the 4th, 6th, or 8th grade [on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills used in

> Alaska's statewide standardized testing program]. A score at the 22nd percentile means that 78 percent of other students across the country scored higher on the test.... [See the Committee's first report for a discussion of the reliability of standardized tests, pages 26 - 28].
>
> Total school population in the twenty [lowest achieving] districts is 12,783.
>
> Average percent of students living in poverty in these districts is 56% as opposed to a statewide average of 21.8%....
>
> Sixteen of the districts report an above average level of bilingual students ranging from 23.5% to 100% enrolled in bilingual education programs....[4]

Because up to one third of Alaska's school age population, approximately 36,000 students, fits one of the various definitions of "students at risk," the group that the fund is primarily intended to benefit, the Committee and the State Board of Education had urged that no less than $3,000,000 be appropriated annually to this fund over the next five years. This amount represents approximately a modest $100 per Alaska "at risk" student per year, if prorated uniformly. Put another way, $3,000,000 is less than half of one percent of the total state appropriation for education annually.

Unfortunately, the appropriation part of the Joint Committee's recommendation was not enacted. Although $100,000 survived the budget process until the final week of the session, even that was cut from the allotment at the close of the Sixteenth Legislature. Thus, the Fund was created in name but not in fact. This status reinforces the perception in the minds of many that the legislature does not take seriously the fact that extraordinary measures will have to be taken to eliminate the unacceptable outcomes of schooling among low achieving districts.

Not only statistics and DOE reports substantiate the need for the Fund. Testimony heard throughout the state calls for measures to reverse the ever-declining quality of learning among "at risk" students and to increase the number of students who complete the twelfth grade. Moreover, testimony bears out the premise that it can be shown that the less "programmatic direction" given to the schools from central administrative units, the more teachers and local community groups are likely to improve school performance when given the proper resources.

The Fund for the Improvement of School Performance was specifically designed with this principle in mind as the language of the legislation passed by the Sixteenth Legislature makes clear. Part (b) of the act provides "that a governing body, district advisory board or nonprofit organization located in the state, or a teacher or principal employed by a school in the state, may apply for a grant to improve school performance by submitting an application to the commissioner." Without funds to accommodate this section of the statute, it serves no purpose. Pupils in need of the creative thinking of teachers and residents at the community level are denied the opportunity that is expected to accrue by means of the Fund. Therefore, as was proposed in its first report:

> *the Joint Committee recommends that no less than $3,000,000 be appropriated annually to the Fund for the Improvement of School Performance over the next five years.*

HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICE PROGRAMS RELATED TO SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

A conclusion reached by the Joint Committee in 1989 and stated in its first report declared: "It may be that there are no root

causes of inadequate school performance greater than environmental and social handicaps, especially those that are the result of chronic poverty." Evidence in support of this contention led to the recommendation that the legislature establish a permanent inter-agency coordinating committee that would be required to identify the most critical social and health barriers to learning, establish plans to overcome them, be responsible for their implementation, and issue annual reports on activities and programs. House Concurrent Resolution 46, introduced by the Committee and passed by the legislature, does just that. Plans are now being put into effect through the Office of the Governor in compliance with the Resolution. Consisting of representatives of the *Departments of Education, Health and Social Services, Community and Regional Affairs, and Labor* and a dean from the University of Alaska who is responsible for teacher training, selected by the Governor, the inter-agency group's first report is awaited.

To underscore the sense of importance the Committee gives to this subject, it recommends:

> ***that a resolution calling for better coordinated services among the departments of social services and health, labor, community and regional affairs, and education, similar to the resolution calling for this effort passed by the 16th Legislature, be enacted by the 17th Legislature.***

LONG TERM AND IMMEDIATE NEEDS FOR STATE SUPPORTED AND COORDINATED EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PARENTING EDUCATION

Convinced from testimony and school visits, especially in village Alaska, that more must be done in the field of early childhood and parenting education if school performance is to be improved, the Committee repeats its opening line from the section on early childhood education in its first report. [Fundamental] "causes that deny children the means or motivation necessary to succeed at schooling ... are inadequate or insufficient early childhood and parenting education programs."

Although the Legislature has not been unresponsive to needs for increased early childhood programs, as demonstrated by last year's substantial increase in funds, much remains to be done. The state's appropriation rose from the governor's requested increase of $1,000,000 to $5,000,000 after the Joint Committee recommended an annual increase of $10,000,000. However, that increase should be considered just the initial increment. As the Department of Community and Regional Affairs develops the capability to utilize increased funds and the Department of Education takes a more substantial leadership role in the pedagogy of early childhood and parenting education, additional funds are certain to be required.

Increased appropriations notwithstanding, the means to resolve issues in early childhood education still dodge the legislature. There are differences in opinion about the extent to which there should be parental participation in learning activities, differences in teaching philosophies, and differences in staff qualifications and staffing patterns, all of which have a direct bearing on differences in quality and costs in early childhood and preschool education. Specific issues identified in the first report that still need to be resolved include: 1) the historical rift between the educational

child development and custodial models of early childhood education; 2) the historical conflicts between elementary school and early childhood education over purposes, methods, and control; and 3) the tradeoffs necessary between the costs and quality of early childhood education. [5]

All but the first of the following policy questions, relating to these issues, posed by the Committee in its first report and introduced in the Sixteenth Legislature in HB 470, (attached as Appendix C), remain unanswered: Which children shall be served? How long should early childhood education programs operate? What level of funding should be provided and how should state and local revenue and parent fees be used? What types of funding mechanisms should be provided for administering early childhood education programs? What types of program controls should be instituted? What types of teacher preparation and certification should be required? And what type of curriculum is necessary to meet the linguistic, developmental, and cultural needs of an early childhood education program. The answer to the first question (what children should be served? is simple and direct. The Joint Committee has concluded that all children are able to benefit from early childhood and parenting programs. Thus every child should be given the opportunity to participate in an early childhood program.

On November 3, 1990, President Bush signed bills to expand the Head Start pre-school program, ostensibly to fund the program fully so that all eligible children will be able to participate. The new legislation authorizes $2.4 billion for Head Start in 1991, rising to $7.7 billion in 1994. This amount represents a 553% increase compared to the 1990 appropriation of $1.39 billion. It is still uncertain how much impact additional federal money will have on Alaska's Head Start program, but even if it is appreciable, there will remain a large number of individuals in need of early childhood

education who do not come under the definition of a federal Head Start participant. This development at the federal level, however, clearly authenticates the need to have the questions posed above definitively answered.

No program has contributed to improved school performance over the past twenty-five years more than Head Start, in Alaska as elsewhere in the country. Much of the reason for its success has been attributed to substantial involvement of parents in the program, a practice the Joint Committee unreservedly endorses as more early childhood and parenting programs are developed in Alaska.

HB 470 passed the House with little opposition, but it stalled in committee in the Senate during the final hours of the Sixteenth Legislature. The Joint Committee is convinced that expanded programs in early childhood and parenting education are essential if school performance is to be improved. Therefore, as was stated in the Committee's first report *it is recommended* :

> *that the legislature, by resolution, establish a Committee to address the issues and questions on early childhood education that pertain to the education of Alaska's young children, with particular attention given to those children with environmental handicaps. Included among the Committee's responsibility shall be the development of a plan for a statewide program of early childhood education and preparation of a report on its findings with recommendations to the legislature no later than May, 1992.*

The opening paragraph of this report referred to the problem of how to cope with the disparate level of school performance found throughout the state. It is this wide gap between student achievement levels in various locations that suggests a critical need

exists for school reform in some of the most fundamental elements of Alaska's systems of education. Since the first report of the Joint Committee was published, results of the 1989 testing program have been made public. The gap between pupils who are succeeding and those who are not has widened even more over previous years, indicating the problem worsens. An extensive feature article on this condition by Larry Campbell in the Anchorage Daily News on May 6, 1990, draws stark attention to the differences between regions of the state. In the article, Campbell points out:

> In the Interior towns of Healy, Anderson and Cantwell are three tiny schools that scored higher on national achievement tests this academic year than any other schools in Alaska, and higher than 70 percent of the schools in America. Their parents make good money at the coal mine in Healy or the Air Force station at Clear, and most have high school diplomas.
>
> In western Alaska, along the Kuskokwim River, the Yupiit School District also serves three small towns. Like the Railbelt district, it has between 300 and 350 students. But the students are all Yupik Eskimo. Hunting and gathering are the mainstays of life. Parents work sporadically, and only a third have high school diplomas.
>
> And Yupiit Schools ranked the lowest of all school districts in the state this school year, 4.55 on the percentile scale, which ranges from 0 to 99....
>
> Overall, Alaska's youngsters scored just above the national average, from the 50th to the 56th percentile, meaning they did better than about half the nation's students. That's about where Anchorage fell, ranking in the 60th percentile.
>
> But the averages mask dramatic extremes of academic achievement in Alaska, as demonstrated by the stark contrasts between the Railbelt and Yupiit districts. Especially for the state's poorer, predominantly Native schools, the scores

FIGURE 1

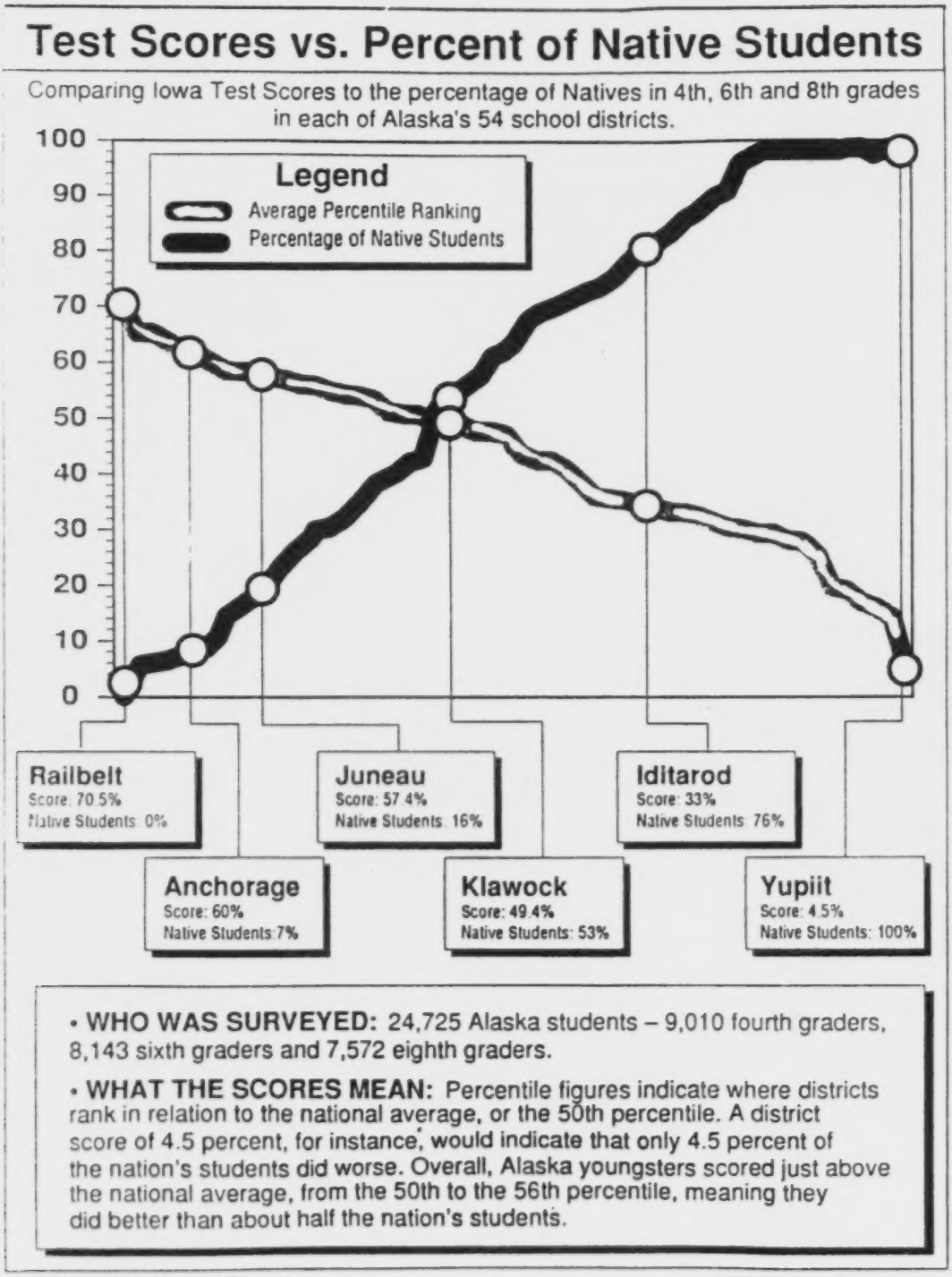
Test Scores vs. Percent of Native Students
Comparing Iowa Test Scores to the percentage of Natives in 4th, 6th and 8th grades in each of Alaska's 54 school districts.
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Legend
Average Percentile Ranking
Percentage of Native Students
Railbelt
Score: 70.5%
Native Students: 0%
Anchorage
Score: 60%
Native Students: 7%
Juneau
Score: 57.4%
Native Students: 16%
Klawock
Score: 49.4%
Native Students: 53%
Iditarod
Score: 33%
Native Students: 76%
Yupiit
Score: 4.5%
Native Students: 100%
• WHO WAS SURVEYED: 24,725 Alaska students – 9,010 fourth graders, 8,143 sixth graders and 7,572 eighth graders.
• WHAT THE SCORES MEAN: Percentile figures indicate where districts rank in relation to the national average, or the 50th percentile. A district score of 4.5 percent, for instance, would indicate that only 4.5 percent of the nation's students did worse. Overall, Alaska youngsters scored just above the national average, from the 50th to the 56th percentile, meaning they did better than about half the nation's students.
Source: Anchorage Daily News Research
LEN FRAZIER / Anchorage Daily News

TABLE 1

Anchorage Daily News Sunday, May 6, 1990 A11

Ways of life influence students' rank

PROFILE OF ALASKA'S 54 SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Including Iowa Basic Test Score Results, October 1989

District	Students	Percentile*	$ Per Student	% Native Students	Students per Teacher	% Budget Towards Instruction
Adak Region School	658	54.2%	$4,425	0.0%	17.3	59%
Alaska Gateway Schools (Tok)	463	53.3%	$5,641	47.7%	15.5	51%
Aleutian Regional Schools	111	41.0%	$3,987	87.5%	15.8	48%
Aleutians East Borough Schools (Sand Point)	180	42.4%	$8,969	74.6%	6.8	56%
Anchorage Schools	38,685	60.0%	$3,152	7.3%	19.3	59%
Annette Island Schools (Metlakatla)	429	32.9%	$4,428	92.8%	11.4	49%
Bering Strait Schools (Unalakleet)	1,250	31.2%	$6,915	96.7%	10.8	47%
Bristol Bay Borough Schools (Naknek)	249	58.3%	$5,560	43.6%	12.4	51%
Chatham Schools (Angoon)	307	47.0%	$6,713	48.1%	10.4	58%
Chugach Schools	98	38.4%	$7,045	56.6%	9.4	46%
Copper River Schools (Glennallen)	597	65.3%	$5,068	18.3%	13.3	54%
Cordova City Schools	428	55.3%	$4,201	19.2%	13.0	58%
Craig City Schools	218	48.8%	$4,175	16.9%	18.6	59%
Delta/Greely Schools	895	63.0%	$3,372	3.2%	15.8	52%
Dillingham City Schools	460	43.7%	$4,373	71.8%	14.1	56%
Fairbanks North Star Borough Schools	13,189	63.7%	$3,632	8.5%	16.5	63%
Galena City Schools	147	32.3%	$6,537	87.0%	7.2	45%
Haines Borough Schools	363	58.4%	$4,731	14.7%	13.7	60%
Hoonah City Schools	251	35.4%	$4,219	54.6%	13.7	55%
Hydaburg City Schools	108	27.8%	$4,827	94.7%	9.1	45%
Iditirod Area Schools (McGrath)	399	33.0%	$7,907	75.7%	12.7	53%
Juneau Borough Schools	4,589	57.4%	$3,720	16.3%	17.8	64%
Kake City Schools	161	34.2%	$4,969	77.5%	10.1	50%
Kashunamiut Schools (Chevak)	165	14.3%	$5,593	100.0%	9.9	44%
Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools	8,232	55.9%	$3,791	8.5%	15.8	58%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough Schools	2,480	50.8%	$3,830	21.1%	17.8	62%
Klawock City Schools	185	49.4%	$4,684	52.8%	12.4	49%
Kodiak Island Borough Schools	2,273	51.2%	$3,891	20.4%	16.4	59%
Kuspuk Schools (Aniak)	392	30.2%	$8,737	82.7%	9.3	57%
Lake and Peninsula Schools (King Salmon)	357	35.1%	$8,104	78.5%	7.5	46%
Lower Kuskokwim Schools (Bethel)	2,638	19.8%	$7,338	87.8%	12.4	54%
Lower Yukon Schools (Mountain Village)	1,288	17.0%	$8,395	98.3%	11.4	47%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough Schools	8,431	56.9%	$3,226	5.0%	18.6	61%
Nenana City Schools	195	50.7%	$5,363	23.4%	12.2	56%
Nome City Schools	749	42.4%	$4,142	63.0%	16.1	54%
North Slope Borough Schools	1,237	29.2%	$9,307	86.3%	11.7	42%
Northwest Arctic Borough Schools (Kotzebue)	1,614	20.3%	$4,825	93.4%	14.4	45%
Pelican City Schools	43	35.8%	$7,780	59.0%	10.3	56%
Petersburg City Schools	658	64.2%	$3,611	13.8%	16.7	61%
Pribilof Schools	149	30.0%	$6,003	100%	11.1	40%
Railbelt Schools (Healy)	337	70.5%	$4,926	0.0%	12.5	54%
Saint Mary's Schools	111	29.2%	$7,663	95.8%	10.0	43%
Sitka Schools	1,658	54.0%	$3,684	25.2%	18.1	66%
Skagway City Schools	144	58.3%	$4,719	3.0%	12.1	55%
Southeast Island Schools (Ketchikan)	517	54.8%	$7,898	2.9%	10.6	72%
Southwest Region Schools (Dillingham)	466	19.1%	$7,683	97.0%	12.3	47%
Tanana City Schools	94	33.9%	$6,650	94.1%	10.0	44%
Unalaska City Schools	188	47.7%	$5,338	22.9%	12.9	54%
Valdez City Schools	686	68.4%	$5,638	3.5%	14.4	54%
Wrangell City Schools	518	47.7%	$4,674	27.9%	13.6	65%
Yakutat City Schools	131	49.4%	$5,244	63.1%	9.3	52%
Yukon Flats Schools (Fort Yukon)	338	16.0%	$9,164	85.8%	10.6	51%
Yukon/Koyukuk Schools (Nenana)	509	28.0%	$8,210	88.0%	10.2	55%
Yupiit Schools (Aklachak)	307	4.8%	$6,223	100%	10.5	38%

Source: Alaska Department of Education * Percentile Ranking Determined by Iowa Basic Test scores (Towns in parenthesis are of district headquarters) LEN FRAZIER / Anchorage Daily News

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turned out low, some very low [Table 1 and Figure 1].

> That's because those districts have everything needed to produce low test scores: poverty, low levels of education among parents, and traditions vastly different from those of the white, urban culture for which American school systems, teaching methods and texts were designed.[6]

It needs to be emphasized at this point that to avoid erroneous conclusions, use of graphs and tables such as those illustrated here are to be looked at with utmost caution. Cursory examination of complex data can lead to unwarranted opinions, attitudes, convictions, and negative stereotyping. Certainly results of Alaska's achievement testing program are not to be construed as statements about the level of ability of any one segment of the population, be it by geographic region, gender, or ethnicity. Nor, as pointed out above, are statistics obtained from the state's testing program to be used to compare one district with another in preferential rank order of performance. The Joint Committee is convinced that "all children can learn," given the proper circumstances and support.

Compounding the problem of unequal school performance among districts, for whatever reason, is the reality that in recent years society in general and the role of schools in particular are changing at an unprecedented rate. As noted by A. Harry Passow, Distinguished Professor of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University:

> [In America] There have been profound changes in the students, the families and communities from which they come, and the schools they attend. In the schools, the changes involve authority, power, and interpersonal and professional relationships, as well as the instructional processes, resources, and climate.... Both adversarial and cooperative relationships between students and faculty, faculty

and administration, schools and parents/communities have increased.[7]

This observation also accurately describes the current situation throughout rural and urban Alaska. It is clear that there is a need for statutes that restate education policy so that it is consistent with the means to overcome shortcomings in schooling due to trends in a changing society and the education profession as well as legislation that accommodates Alaska's immense diversity. In this way, negative extremes in the bimodel curve illustrated in the graph above may be reduced and the dilemma they reflect eliminated. There is a need for many new programs to improve the likelihood of success for those students labeled "at risk." The Fund for the Improvement of Education, better coordinated social, welfare, and health services, and enhanced and expanded early childhood are only the first steps of many that should follow.

Appropriately, the first report concluded with a quote from the book Excellence in Education: The States Take Charge: "Just as the opportunities for genuine and lasting reform have never been greater, so too have the dangers of failure never been more stark...." [8] Certainly this statement holds true in Alaska, even more so today than when the Joint Committee's first report was issued a year ago. In the Chapters that follow, additional recommendations have been set forth as a result of the Joint Committee's deliberations. Implementation of these recommendations alongside those of the first report is a necessary precondition to lasting improvement in school performance.

THE TASK FOR STATES IS NOT TO SELECT THE SINGLE BEST APPROACH. RATHER, THE FUNDAMENTAL TASK FOR STATES IS TO SORT OUT WHICH MIX OF CONTROL STRATEGIES, REWARDS, AND SANCTIONS WILL CONTRIBUTE MOST EFFECTIVELY TO [IMPROVEMENTS IN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE] ACCORDING TO EACH PARTICULAR STATE'S CIRCUMSTANCES.

MICHAEL COHEN
NATIONAL GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

# # #

IF NEW DIRECTIVES IN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE ARE TO SUCCEED IN THE YEARS AHEAD, THE ALASKA LEGISLATURE, THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR, AND THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MUST GUARANTEE THAT THIS TASK WILL BE ACTED UPON POSITIVELY AND WITHOUT DELAY.

JOINT SENATE-HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE
JANUARY, 1991

CHAPTER TWO

STRUCTURAL CONTROL OF SCHOOLING: ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Traditionally policy makers have mandated objectives for public education as a means to effect school reform. Chapter 173 in Alaska statutes, described in Chapter One, is a classic example of this technique. Another method, and in the minds of some a more realistic and tangible one, is to alter the structural form of the education system. This chapter discusses changes to structural form that the Joint Committee believes will improve school performance. These include the following: 1) school governance and finance, 2) professional development through personnel training and certification, 3) program definition and curriculum, and 4) research, evaluation, and dissemination.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

The most fundamental structural elements in Alaska's schools are its systems of governance and finance. Of the two, the manner in which schools are financed is the one most often the subject of public interest and the one most apt to come under the scrutiny of the legislature. Nonetheless, several systems of school governance have been deployed since the beginning of formal American education in Alaska over one hundred years ago. A brief review of the changes that led to the current systems of both governance and finance helps to clarify the issues facing the legislature today.

School Governance and Finance in Historical Perspective [9]

The origins of what was to become a dual, territorial (later state)-federal system of education that persisted well into the 1980s derived from settlers who arrived in Alaska during the early years of the 20th century as part of the gold rush and other commercial ventures of that period. By an act of Congress in 1905, municipal governments were authorized to establish schools for the children of settlers; these schools were separate from existing federal schools. Most efforts at formal education, primarily for Native children, had previously been undertaken by missionaries, the U.S. Bureau of Education (Department of Interior), and in a few instances local citizens.

The territorial legislature in 1917 enacted what came to be called the Uniform School Act. It established a territorial department of education and thereby systematized schools for non-natives on a territory-wide basis. Earlier that year the United States Congress empowered the territory to "establish and maintain schools for white children and colored children and children of mixed blood who led civilized lives." The first territorial Commissioner of Education had the job, on the one hand, of developing a system of territorial control over the city schools through processes not unlike most chief state school officers, and on the other of performing all the duties as administrator for the rural system.

Native children were excluded from the authority of the territorial Department of Education since it was generally agreed that the education of Natives was already and should remain the responsibility of the federal government. The attitude of the first territorial Commissioner of Education was consistent with this provision and reflected the law and the separatist attitudes of that

period. The Commissioner declared in the Department's first official report:

> There are several objections to the maintenance of a unified system of schools for white and native children, the principle ones being the irregularity of the attendance of the natives and their inability to conform to the standards of the whites in the matter of health and sanitation.... The highest good of both races ... seems to require separate schools for at least a few decades.[10]

Thus, it became official policy that the territorial system was to be uniform for "white" children and that federal schools were to be maintained for Native pupils.

Since a policy established during this period favored separate school systems according to race, it is of significance that a unique and unanticipated attendance pattern developed contrary to the intent of this policy. As time went by, increasingly more villages contained either a territorial school or a federal school but not both. The greatest number of exceptions occurred in the incorporated city school districts and rural schools with mixed populations. In these locations segregated federal and territorial schools prevailed. Nevertheless, eventually many Native pupils came to attend territorial/state schools despite the Commissioner's earlier declaration.

Historical accident is sometimes given as one reason this attendance pattern emerged. Villages with schools established early in the American period, especially former mission schools, originated and remained in the federal system. And when new schools in the most remote villages with nearly exclusive Native populations were established, they were usually federal, although here too there were notable exceptions. Generally, however, if new schools were added to the territorial system, they were in villages

along the coast, including the Aleutian Islands, along the railbelt and highway system, and in mining communities.

Another factor that increased the number of Native pupils in territorial schools was a ruling by the territorial attorney general in 1943. Faced with increasing instances of strife in the villages because of attempts to integrate Native and white students on the part of some and resistance to this trend on the part of others, the Territorial Commissioner of Education requested an opinion from the attorney general on the rights of Native children relative to school attendance. The attorney general ruled that Native pupils could not be compelled to attend solely Native schools if a school for other children was provided in the community. [11] Compared with attitudes toward race at the time, the opinion was remarkable for its directness. This was also the period when Governor Gruening, the Alaska Native Brotherhood, and others were pressuring for an end to segregation in employment and public facilities and the legislature outlawed discrimination in hotels and restaurants. Alaska appears to have been ten to twenty years ahead of the nation as a whole in matters of civil rights.

As territorial and city schools became more integrated, the original notion that they be maintained exclusively for non-Natives became immaterial, although it was not until 1967 that segregated, dual federal-state schools within the same community disappeared completely. (Northway was the site of the last instance where there were two school units in a single community: one for Natives [BIA] and one for non-Natives [state]). The BIA did not entirely discontinue education services in Alaska until 1985.

Following statehood in 1959, four years elapsed before much attention was given to the structure of the dual system of schools. It was not until 1962 that attention was drawn to the matter. In that year a memorandum of agreement developed between the Bureau

of Indian Affairs and the state calling for a common program of education between the two groups. Subsequently, a U.S. Department of Interior Task Force suggested that a single, distinct administrative structure was essential if schools were to respond effectively to the multicultural composition of the Alaska population. With attention of the Kennedy Committee on Indian Education focused on schooling in Alaska in the mid 1960s and the Great Society programs of President Lyndon Johnson, designed to overcome poverty and assist minorities in their campaign to achieve equal opportunity, the status of education became a major statewide issue, especially among the Native population. Until this time no strong voice from Native consumers of educational services had been heard, and especially not from those in the villages. Emergence of the Native population into the movement for improved schools gave it credibility and momentum.

Recognition of the need for programs of education designed with Native needs in mind gave rise in 1970 to the Alaska State Operated School System (ASOSS). Independent of the state Department of Education, which had been administering the schools outside municipal districts since 1932, and governed by its own board of directors with regional Native representation, ASSOS was given responsibility for all rural schools (other than those in the still active BIA system) in the "unorganized borough." ASOSS, anticipated as a positive move in the direction of Native involvement in education, soon became a cumbersomely administered bureaucracy accused of insensitivity to the culture of rural people and inadequate to meet their needs. Because of this view ASOSS became the last major centralized governmental unit to govern non-federal village schools.

At the request of the state Department of Education and the legislature, the University of Alaska at Fairbanks undertook a study to identify alternative ways of providing school services for the

unorganized borough. Recommendations derived from the study, in conjunction with the Alaska Federation of Natives, were incorporated in an act of the legislature that created Regional Education Attendance Areas (REAAs) as "service districts" in the unorganized borough. They became operational in July, 1976, ending forty-four years of direct territorial/state operation of non-municipal schools.

When REAAs were established, the demand for local control was so pronounced that the legislature and state board took extraordinary measures to assure that there would be a minimum of interference from state government in REAA school affairs. Recently, however, testimony taken by the Senate Special Committee on Education and by the Joint Committee suggests that the mechanisms created at that time may have worked as much to the detriment of local interests as to their advantage. By definition, REAAs are regional units of state government since they have neither constitutional status nor independent taxing and budgetary powers; they are not local units of government as thought by some who administer or govern them. Some REAAs are quite large, containing many villages within their boundaries; others are small in size and population. At first, REAAs were seen as a transitional measure until rural communities became able to support education services financially and until experience in managing schools had become more widespread. REAAs now, however, have become firmly ensconced units of government. Their endurance, seen as detrimental by some and favorable by others, is one reason some of today's issues have arisen.

Operational procedures in borough and city school districts have undergone fewer changes over the years than schools in the rural areas, although the relaxing of Department of Education oversight responsibility has enabled all districts to become more autonomous than ever before. For example, at one time school

district activities were assiduously monitored at the state level, and even annual line item approval of school district budgets by the Commissioner of Education was routine. Now school districts within boroughs and cities are considered to be essential units of local government, and their authority is thought by many to be inalienable. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that it took the legislature in the early 1960s to mandate the creation of most of Alaska's borough school districts.

The history of school finance in Alaska is no less convoluted than governance, and the ways that funds have been raised and distributed over time have undergone several changes. At first, in the latter part of the 19th Century, funds for schools came from the U.S. Department of Interior (Bureau of Education), town governments, churches, business firms, and local citizen contributions. During the first thirty years of the 20th Century, school operations (other than in the federal system) were supported mostly with license monies collected in incorporated communities and with grants or entitlements from the territorial legislature.

As district needs became greater, the territorial legislature, in 1931, began supporting school districts with a guaranteed, fixed amount of foundation money based on size of enrollment. On the assumption that costs were greater on a per pupil basis in the smaller school communities, the smallest districts were allotted 85 % of their prescribed basic need, medium sized districts 80 %, and the largest 75 %. Although the formula was easy to administer, it did not take into account a district's inability to raise money nor extraordinary circumstances that might result in higher operational costs. While the formula did, however, markedly improve the financial security of the city districts it did not provide for equality of opportunity for students nor for equity among district tax payers. Schools outside of cities continued to be funded at 100 % by the territory/state, further impairing Alaska-wide tax equity.

As it became apparent that differences existed among districts concerning their ability to generate tax revenue and maintain schools, the need for a more sophisticated and equitable method of allocating state school funds intensified. To their credit, Alaskans were among the first of several states in the country to recognize the need for equity in inter-district state funding of schools. Commissioned by the State Board of Education, Alaska's first equalization foundation plan, published in 1961 and enacted into law by the legislature in 1962, provided for the equitable distribution of state money to city and borough school districts according to each district's ability to raise local funds. [12]

Changing conditions brought modifications to the plan, but in the minds of some they are not sufficient to enable the system to cope with conditions that vary and increased expenses. These are discussed below under the section on issues. But first, to clarify the Joint Committee's recommendations in this area, what follows is a brief consideration of some of the principles and terms embodied in an equitable system of state school support.

Equity Principles and Other Concepts in School Finance

The need for school finance reform across the country became a major national movement in the 1970s. Court decisions that grew out of the movement have since been felt at all levels of school funding everywhere. In the early 1980s the movement leveled off and declined, but it is once again emerging as a contentious topic in several states, especially in light of attention given to current court cases in Texas, New Jersey, and now in Alaska, where equity is at issue in a lawsuit brought against the state by the Mat-Su Borough School District in December, 1990.

The principle of fiscal equity and its close counterpart, student equality of opportunity, have remained the driving force of the movement for better balanced fiscal policy in Alaska, as elsewhere. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that there are two branches of fiscal equity: the revenue or tax dimension and the distribution or expenditure dimension. Generally, legislatures and the courts have been concerned with both, tax and expenditure equity.

Equity, as used by the Joint Committee, is derived from the doctrine of fairness and impartiality. This doctrine requires that answers to questions about governance and finance be considered in general terms of fairness, especially fairness in levying tax burdens, allocating the wealth of the state as a whole, and sharing decision making mechanisms. Moreover, they also must be answered in terms of equality of opportunity to learn among all the children of the state. It is the measure of *equity* in the system that distinguishes the level of *equality* of educational opportunity accorded by the system.

Until the latter half of the 20th Century, equality of educational opportunity was seldom a concern in the majority of school finance and governance systems. But thirty to forty years ago, equality took on new meaning in school finance reform, especially following Brown v. Topeka in 1954. For example, Charles Benson of the University of California, noted scholar in school governance and finance systems, described in 1961 the principle as applied to schooling this way:

> The one universally accepted criterion of a public activity is that it affords equal treatment to all. With respect to schooling, this implies that any two children of the same abilities shall receive equivalent forms of assistance in developing those abilities....[13]

How to develop the means and find the resources to guarantee this notion has become an inescapable consideration of those responsible for developing educational policy. Nonetheless, as fundamental and necessary as the principle of equal treatment to all with the same abilities may be, it is not sufficient in a multicultural society such as exists in Alaska. The following discussion describes the reason for this assertion. [14]

Equal educational opportunity can be defined in several ways. In making school finance policy the definition chosen determines to a great extent the type of school finance system that will follow. Listed below are seven concepts of educational equality relating to school finance, first identified and described by Arthur Wise while at the University of Chicago.

1. the foundation system concept
2. the equal-dollars-per pupil concept
3. the competition concept
4. the fiscal neutrality concept
5. the leveling concept
6. the minimum attainment concept
7. the full opportunity concept

In brief, they may be described as follows:

1. The "foundation system concept" requires a satisfactory minimum offering, expressed in money to be spent, which shall be guaranteed to each pupil. This was the concept most relied on in Alaska's territorial system for distributing funds. Many complex formulas have been derived to satisfy the guarantee feature of this system, all based on the fundamental idea that certain minimums are essential for all, regardless of local resources.

2. The "equal-dollars-per pupil" concept assumes there is no reason for one individual, minority or majority, rural or urban, bright or dull, to be granted more resources than another. Ability is not considered a sufficient reason for differential allocation of funds.

3. The "competition concept" provides distribution of resources to students according to their talent. In this definition, equality is an individual rather than a social focus. It simply means that the more able students deserve more education, regardless of the wealth of parents, ethnicity, or location.

4. The "fiscal neutrality concept" stresses that education may not be a function of wealth other than the wealth of the state as a whole. Therefore, school financing systems must make financial resources from taxes equally available for the education of each child, regardless of the district in which he or she lives. This is the principle most often cited as a feature necessary to assure equality of opportunity.

5. The "leveling concept" requires that resources be allocated in inverse proportion to the ability of each student. In effect, this approach compensates for the shortcomings of some pupils and is typically provided in categorical, compensatory programs.

6. The "minimum-attainment concept" of educational equality requires that each student shall receive educational resources until he or she reaches a specified level of achievement, regardless of the time required.

7. The "full opportunity concept" assumes that students may differ in their ability to learn and that each person should be given an

opportunity to develop his or her abilities to the fullest, regardless of the length of time required. [15]

These seven concepts of equality of opportunity can be expressed as two equity principles:

1. The equal treatment of equals, or horizontal equity principle.

2. The unequal treatment of unequals, or vertical equity principle.

Berne and Stiefel have explained the two principles this way:

> Horizontal equity is concerned with the equality of revenues for all children.... Children are assumed to be equally deserving, and horizontal equity measures the difference between the actual distribution and a perfectly equal distribution. The smaller the difference from equality, the greater the horizontal equity....
>
> If members of the group are not equal and some are judged to be deserving of more or less of the object of concern, then application of the vertical ... principle may be appropriate.... If learning handicaps are recognized as a characteristic that identifies children who should receive more revenues than children without learning handicaps, then the principle of vertical equity is applicable.... [Thus], vertical equity can be expressed as the unequal treatment of unequals....[16]

The current system of distributing financial resources to school districts in Alaska contains features from both the vertical and horizontal principles of equity. Features of the foundation system concept, the fiscal neutrality concept, and the leveling concept can be identified. The current system was adopted during the 1987 legislative session (Chapter 91, SLA 1987). (A brief explanation of Alaska's current system of distributing state school funds appears in "A Review of Alaska's Foundation Funding Program" published by

EXHIBIT 1

A Review

The Alaska School Foundation Funding Program

January 1989

Alaska's Public School Foundation Program, AS 14.17 enables the state to meet fiscal equalization criteria outlined in the federal PL-874 law, commonly known as the "disparity test." Alaska must meet the guidelines in order to utilize approximately $70 million in PL-874 funds within the state foundation plan as general revenues.

PL 81-874 Disparity Test - The federal PL-874 disparity test measures the disparity in local school district expenditures. The test takes into consideration designated state and local revenues. Under guidelines of the disparity test, the range of revenues may not vary more than 25 percent between the school district that raises the lowest amount of revenues per instructional unit and the school district that raises the greatest amount. Since federal regulations allow states to eliminate five percent of the students at the top of the scale and five percent at the bottom, Alaska eliminates both of its oil rich school districts, Valdez and North Slope Borough, which contribute considerably more than 25 percent beyond the lowest amount. Since REAAs are not authorized to raise local taxes, five percent of the students at the bottom of the scale can be from any REAA. The disparity test uses $60,000 per instructional unit as the base.

The Foundation Program is based on the "instructional unit" method of funding.

The definitions printed on page 2, when used with the two mathematical formulas below and the numerical data on page 4, provide for understanding the foundation law.

Alaska Department of Education

The formula used to calculate basic need:

Basic Need = (Instructional Units) x (Area Cost Differential) x ($60,000)

The formula used to calculate state foundation aid:

State Foundation Aid = (Basic Need) - (Local Effort) - (90% Eligible PL-874)

TERMS AND CONCEPTS:

ADM (AVERAGE DAILY MEMBERSHIP) - The average of the number of students enrolled in a school district or specific school program (vocational education, bilingual education, special education) over a specified fall or spring reported period. The more students a district has in Average Daily Membership, the more funding it receives through the foundation program.

INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT - A number represented by a group of students identified by grade levels and whether the students are enrolled in vocational, special or bilingual education programs.

AREA COST DIFFERENTIAL - A factor multiplied by a school district's instructional units to adjust for costs - primarily personnel costs - in various school districts. Factors vary between 1.0 and 1.46, depending usually on remoteness of the district.

INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT VALUE - The amount under the new foundation formula is $60,000 per instructional unit. That amount was established by the regulation when the law was passed.

BASIC NEED - An amount of money determined by multiplying the area cost differential by the number of a school district's allowable instructional units times the instructional unit value, set annually by the legislature. The foundation program sets the instructional unit value at $60,000.

REQUIRED LOCAL EFFORT - Under the law, city and borough school districts are required to contribute the lesser amount of:

(1) the equivalent of funds generated by a four mill tax levy based on the full and true value of the taxable real and personal property in the school district; or

(2) 35 percent of a school district's basic need for the preceding school year.

School districts are not allowed to contribute more than the equivalent of 2.0 mills or $12,600 per adjusted unit in addition to required local effort in order to hold disparities in funding per instructional unit among school districts to no more than 25 percent. The amount of local effort, either in the 4 mill equivalent or 35 percent basic need, is subtracted from a school district's basic need. Since Regional Education Attendance Areas do not have authority to collect taxes, there is no deduction for the local contribution portion of basic need in these districts.

PL-874 - Federal Law PL-874, impact aid to education, provides federal funds to school districts for children of parents living and/or working on federal property as an "in lieu of local tax: revenue. Under the foundation program 90 percent of each school district's eligible PL-874 receipts is subtracted from the district's basic need.

STATE FOUNDATION AID - The amount of state money school districts are entitled to receive under the Public School Foundation Program, after local and federal shares are deducted. *(See page 4, column G.)*

Other Issues:

Declining Enrollment - The law contains language that protects districts from losing more than 10 percent of the prior year's K-12 instructional units.

Centralized Correspondence Study - The law provides a formula for computing funds for the state Centralized Correspondence Study program. Instructional units are computed under the same formula used by elementary schools with more than 200 students and multiplied by 0.65.

Gathering/ Reporting Student Data - The statute requires districts to report to the Department of Education by October 15 of each school Year an estimate of its student population for the next school year. The Department of Education will use the estimates to determine the amount of state foundation aid to seek from the Legislature for the following school year.

Fund Balance Limitation - The law prohibits districts from accumulating an unreserved fund balance of more than 10 percent of their operating expenditures for the year. The Department of Education must deduct the amount exceeding 10 percent from a school district's succeeding year's foundation entitlement.

Full and True Value - The Department of Community and Regional Affairs will determine the full value of the taxable real and personal property in each city and borough school district for the purpose of calculating a school district's required local effort.

Distribution Procedures - The Department of Education will make payment of foundation aid through monthly payments to school districts. The payments for the first nine months of each fiscal year will be based on actual student counts for the prior school year. Payments for the last three months will be adjusted by actual year student counts. Any overpayments or underpayments made during the first nine months will be adjusted in the final three payments of the fiscal year. The first counting period will be during a 20-day period ending on the fourth Friday in each October. A subsequent reporting period, a 20-day period ending the second Friday of each February, may be used to calculate foundation funding, if the February counting period yields more instructional units.

Factors Affecting FY 90

PL-874 Changes - Federal law now allows local school districts to receive 125% of their normal impact aid money for students who qualify under the Indian and Native impact aid formula. Under this new program, the 25% above the normal 100% share cannot be taken into consideration in state funding formulas. The prohibition was adopted so that the local school districts in equalized states, such as Alaska, would receive the full 25% add-on benefit. In Alaska the new add-on rule results in a loss of funding from the foundation program of $7,804,925 for FY 90.

Reduced Local Share - A significant reduction of the assessed value of property in most municipal school districts has reduced the value of the required local share of basic need in the FY 90 foundation formula. Under the foundation formula, the state must make up the difference between this reduced local share and basic need. This increases the projected full entitlement cost of the foundation formula by $20,406,269 for FY 90.

the Department of Education in 1989, and is inserted as Exhibit 1. Detailed provisions of the entire system are delineated in Chapter 17, sections 14.17.010 - 14.17.250 of the compiled Alaska statutes, attached as Appendix D.)

In general, ways to raise money for education, the revenue dimension of school finance, are as various as the ways that can be devised for allocating funds. But compared to many states, the manner by which school funds are raised in Alaska are relatively uncomplicated. Exhibit 1 briefly describes the current system of generating school district funds as well as the means for distributing them. Among the most noticeable features in the revenue dimension is the fact that REAA districts have no local tax liability.

A detailed explanation (prepared by the Department of Community and Regional Affairs) of the means by which local revenues are generated, especially property taxes, appears as Appendix E. As forthright and uncomplicated as the system ostensibly is, equity issues in the revenue dimension are increasingly attracting attention. A detailed description of both the revenue and distribution dimensions of Alaska's system of school finance is provide below in the section dealing with issues in school finance.

Equity Principles and Concepts in School Governance

To govern customarily implies the authority to make and administer public policy, thereby controlling and regulating the actions of others. Governance as a determinant of school performance ranges from the broadest of policy topics at the state level, such as judicial decisions on constitutional issues, to legislative

matters, such as creating or dissolving school districts and funding the foundation program, to state board activities, such as regulating teacher certification and graduation requirements, to routine responsibilities in local districts, such as the selection of administrators and vendors of school supplies. At a meeting of the Alaska Coalition for Education in October, 1990, 130 subjects were identified as coming under the heading of governance. With so many topics subject to control, the question of which level of authority has the ultimate responsibility to adjudicate an issue often complicates the process, especially since interests in the outcome of each issue may be affected at each level.

In recent years criticism of schooling in general has increased steadily. For example, the "bankruptcy" of the wholly funded Copper Valley REAA by action of its superintendent and board did much to damage the credibility of "local control" in the legislature and with the general public. Public comment regarding school district expenditures for lobbying, litigation, and legal fees not connected with litigation has been negative as well. And as pointed out by Michael Kirst, one of the country's foremost authorities on the organization and control of education, a loss of confidence in local education authorities has weakened the traditional American commitment to local control of education. Furthermore, Kirst asserts that

> The urge to reform education results from a loss of confidence in the local capacity to maintain high academic standards. Many superintendents cannot control their agenda or structure the outcomes of decisions as they could in the past. The golden age of the superintendent has passed, with profound consequences for administrative control.... [and] school boards have been subjected to an unprecedented attack during the 1980s. Additionally, local boards continue to grapple with problems in the necessarily grey area between the board's policymaking and the superintendent's administrative responsibilities....[17]

There are those who contend that Kirst's observations, drawn from the country as a whole, do not apply to Alaska. Nevertheless, during the life of the Joint Committee, ill-suited systems of school governance have often been cited as the basis for this type of criticism. Whether or not this is an accurate or well-informed perception remains to be definitively confirmed, but declining confidence in local education authorities as a result of inadequate school performance is a stark reality in Alaska today. Many, if not most, observers of and participants in education are quick to acknowledge that much of Kirst's commentary is credible throughout Alaska. For example, the chairperson of the Alaska Coalition on Education's subcommittee on governance observed at a recent statewide meeting (October, 1990) that many school superintendents and school board members are concerned about the declining credibility of Alaska's school districts, that district governance is often seen as inefficient and uncaring, and that change is inevitable. Few participants demurred. A question was then posed by the chair: "Will change be through legislation or innovative ways of the districts on an individual basis?" [18] The answer may depend on whether districts are able to regain the confidence of the public through effective restructured schooling.

Prior to an examination of specific issues in school governance, a brief review of how the system is presently constituted is appropriate. Fifty-four districts comprise the system as a whole: 16 borough school districts, 18 first class city school districts, and 20 REAA school districts in the unorganized borough. They are governed by approximately 330 school board members. These policy makers regulate the activities of 6708 full time equivalent teachers (6586 of whom are in classrooms), 1005 administrators and managers at various levels and hundreds of

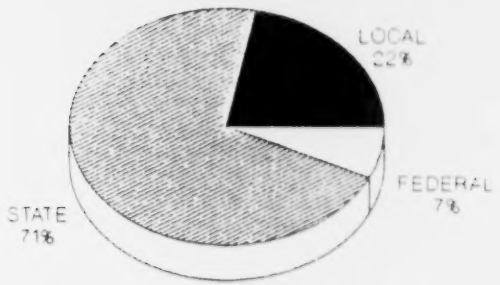
support personnel, all of whom in turn are serving 112,161 students in 1990-91.

There are three types of school districts in Alaska: 1) each first class city in the unorganized borough is a city school district, 2) each organized borough, regardless of class, is a borough school district, and 3) the area outside organized boroughs and outside first class cities (the unorganized borough) is divided into Regional Education Attendance Areas. (The Court has declared it is implied in statute, although not specified, that REAAs are to perform as school districts.) Although each class of school district functions under somewhat different rules, especially in matters of school finance, all schools in the state are generally regarded as the Alaska system of education. That system, however, has anomalous political and geographical boundaries arranged in a way that may be difficult to justify from a number of important standpoints. These include the problems of equitable distribution of decision making authority, of efficiency of daily operation and prudent expenditure of financial resources, and of the capacity to make programmatic changes that might lead to improved school performance.

Examples of organizational arrangements that cause these problems include the following: the Chugach REAA surrounds the city of Cordova and skirts the city of Valdez; the Lower Yukon REAA surrounds the Kashunamuit REAA and the municipality of Saint Marys; the Lower Kuskokwim REAA geographically includes the Yupit REAA; and the Southeast Islands REAA includes the municipalities of Craig, Hydaburg, Kake, Klawaock, Petersburg, and Wrangell. These are just some of the extraordinary organizational arrangements that have evolved over the past fifteen years that affect equity, efficiency, prudence, and judicious change. Organization, however, is only one probable cause of these problems; diversity of situations is another.

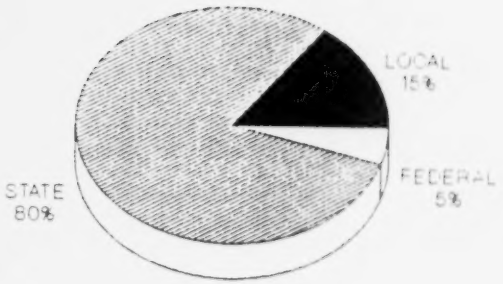
FIGURE 2

FOUNDATION FUNDING BY SOURCE
FISCAL YEAR 1988



BASED ON ACTUAL FUNDING

FOUNDATION FUNDING BY SOURCE
FISCAL YEAR 1991



BASED ON FULL FUNDING

In average daily membership districts range in population from 28 pupils to over 40,000. Some are single site districts; others have many schools in a single municipality or REAA. In physical size districts range from fewer than just a few square miles to others that encompass tens of thousands. The largest, the North Slope Borough, occupies 84,983 square miles (slightly larger than the state of Minnesota.) In fiscal 1991 this assortment of districts is supported with $511,081,199 from state revenues in operational expenses through the foundation program and over $230,000,000 from other sources, mostly local property taxes and federal entitlements. Figure No. 2 graphically shows sources of school district revenue in 1988 and 1991. Briefly stated, the enterprise is immense and complex. It is also sometimes described as cost ineffective, cumbersome, and difficult to monitor from the state level where responsibility for its operation ultimately resides. With this general description of Alaska's school system in mind and declining confidence in school district effectiveness a reality, it may be asked, what are the policy issues associated with school finance and governance?

Current Issues in School Finance

Almost every factor in the School Foundation Funding Program is presently being questioned in one way or another by one group or another. Some factors are considered more important than others, and some are more problematic than others. But on average there appears to be more discontent than satisfaction with the system as a whole. The most vexing issues in the system, posed as questions, include:

1) Do economy of scale and regional cost differentials account for and thereby justify the wide disparity in expenditure per pupil in average daily membership found throughout the state?

2) Should REAAs continue to be exempt from local tax efforts? Are communities in REAAs such as Glennallen, Tok, Delta, Bethel, and McGrath less able or willing to pay local taxes to maintain schools than say, to name only a few, Ninilchik, Nenana, St. Marys, Nome, or Kotzebue where taxes are paid? Several REAAs have the potential for higher assessed valuations than many municipal districts.

3) Are the means used to determine local tax mill rate equivalents fair? Are they adequate? Should the optional maximum allowable local contribution differential be reduced? Increased? What effect do optional contributions have on fiscal neutrality?

4) Is the schedule for calculating instructional units equitable for all districts? Do they assign the correct number of units to small schools and to special programs?

5) Are area cost differential values realistic? Are there better ways to calculate them?

6) Are the assessment practices for determining full and true property values adequate? Are they applied uniformly throughout the state? (Although Alaska law requires an equal and uniform system of local taxation and has established standards for appraisal of all property assessed by the state or its political subdivisions, vast differences in property type and location and varied provisions for tax exemptions create the potential for inequities to trickle into the system. The equitable distribution of state aid in the foundation formula is

so dependent on accurate and equitable statewide assessment practices that it may be time to determine if the system is working as planned.

7) Is the present instructional unit value the right amount required to meet "basic need"? Can basic need be better defined?

8) Should districts continue to have the freedom to use funds generated by the foundation program without specification or limitation placed on them by the state?

9) Are the "creative financing" practices of some districts in the way they raise local contributions in lieu property tax excessive?

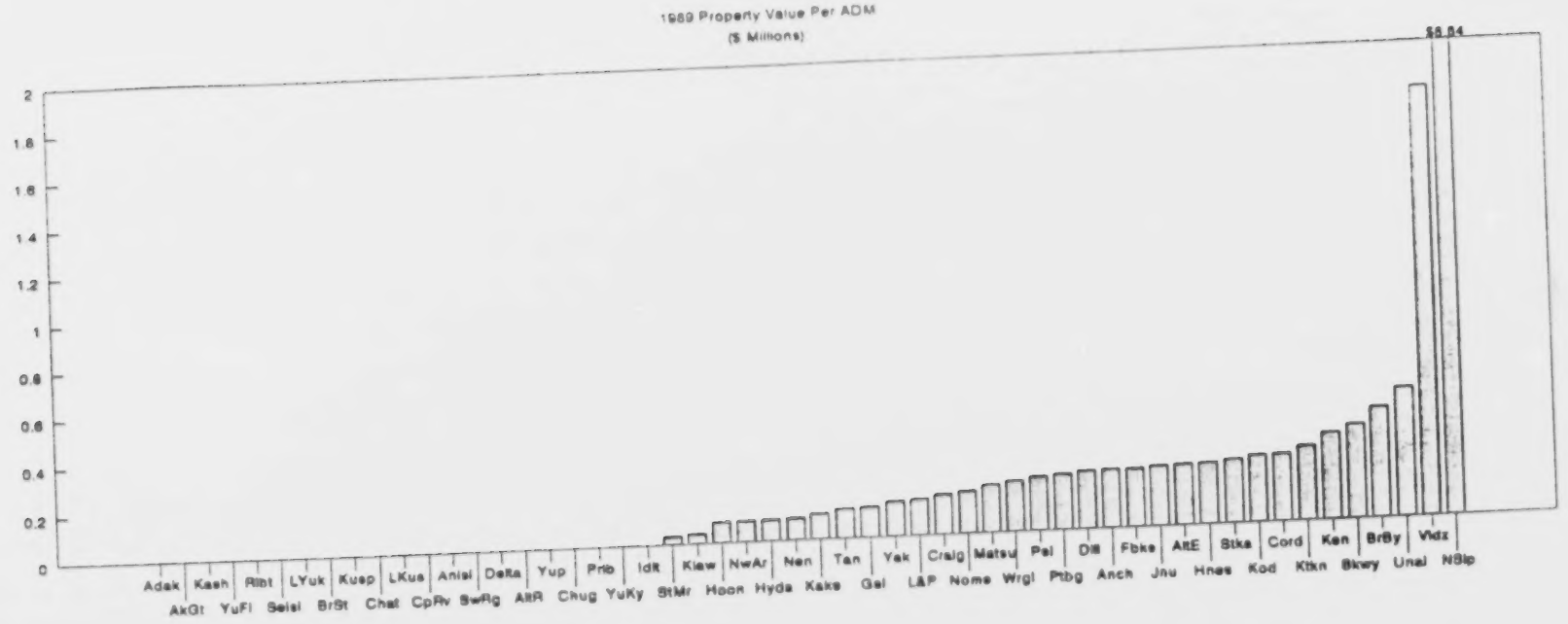
10. How can funds for early childhood and parenting education be made available as an annual entitlement in the foundation program although expenditures in support of these programs are made outside the formal school system?

11) Should the Foundation Program be funded in a separate appropriation prior to adoption of the state's annual budget?

12) To what extent do qualifying requirements of P.L. 874 (intended to reduce resource inequity among districts) have a reverse effect by producing resource disparity?

The issue that transcends all of those above, and which is the most imperative, asks the question, Does the present system meet the test of fiscal neutrality? That is, is the wealth of the state as a whole made equally available for the education of each child? Related questions ask: Is there equality of resources among property rich and property poor districts after state funds are made available? Is there tax liability equity among municipal school

FIGURE 3


1989 Property Value Per ADM
($ Millions)
$8.84
2
1.8
1.6
1.4
1.2
1
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
0
Adak Kash Ribt LYuk Kusp LKus Anisl Delta Yup Prib Idit Klaw NwAr Nen Tan Yak Craig Matsu Pel Dill Fbks AltE Stka Cord Ken BrBy Vldz
AkGt YuFl Selsl BrSt Chat CpRv SwRg AltR Chug YuKy StMr Hoon Hyda Kake Gal LAP Nome Wrgl Ptbg Anch Jnu Hnes Kod Ktkn Bkwy Unal NSlp

Prepared by the Legislative Research Agency, December 1990 (91-097)

55

districts? Is intra district financial equality aggravated by taxpayer inequity between municipal districts where local taxes are paid and REAA districts where there is no local tax liability? The condition of the foundation program, as displayed in the following graphs, suggests that answers to these questions are apt to reveal a badly flawed system in need of recasting.

Figure 3 graphically illustrates the range of property wealth (revenue- generating potential) in dollars per average daily membership (ADM) in each of Alaska's school districts. Values of assessed property range from $35,464 per child in the poorest property district to $8,840,927 per child in the wealthiest. There are seven districts where a one mill tax would bring in less the $100.00 per child in average daily membership (and $35.00 per ADM in the poorest), and there are seven districts where a one mill tax would bring in more than $300.00 per ADM (in the richest district, one mill can bring in $8,800.00 per ADM.) The remaining nineteen city and borough districts fall in the middle range. REAAs are shown on the graph as having no local tax base since they have no taxing authority.

Figures 4 and 5 illustrate AS 14.17.025, that part of the foundation program that specifies the amount that local districts must and what they may not provide to their annual budgets as local contributions. This section requires that local districts (other than REAAs) raise the equivalent of a four mill tax on a full and true value of taxable real and personal property tax or 35 % of the district's basic need for the preceding year. The outcomes of this feature of the program are represented in Figure 4. (The North Slope Borough is required to raise less than one mill to meet its local obligations and Valdez only one mill.)

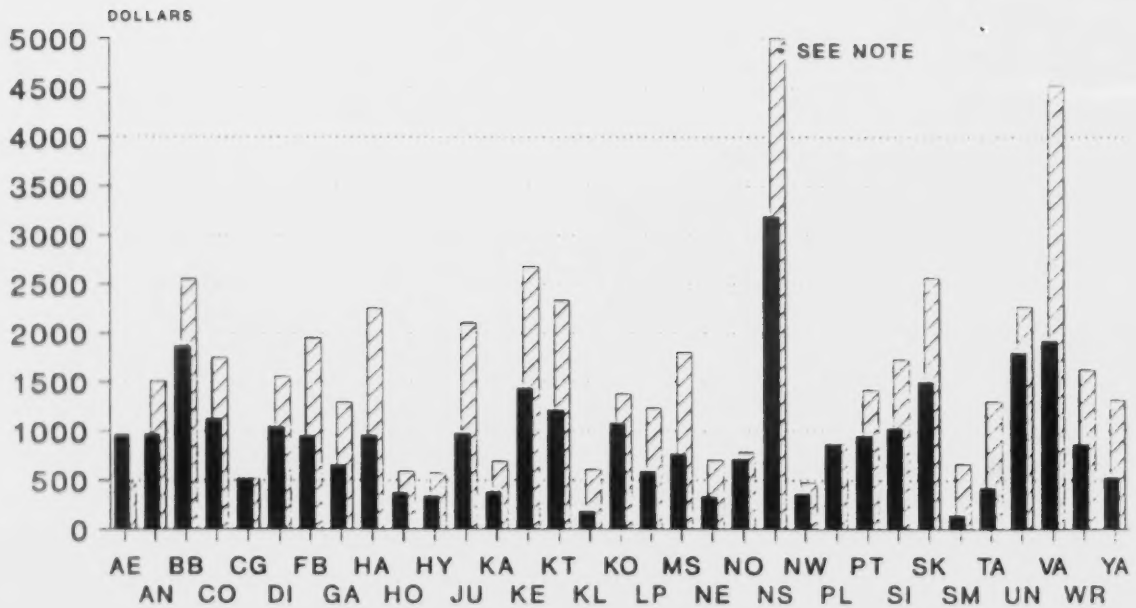
Figure 5 illustrates the effect of the provision of the act that allows city and borough districts to exceed the required level of local

FIGURE 4

LOCAL REVENUE PER PUPIL FY91
REQUIRED & BUDGETED AS 14.17.025

City/Borough abbreviations

Aleutians East • AE
Anchorage • AN
Bristol Bay • BB
Cordova • CO
Craig • CG
Dillingham • DI
Fairbanks • FB
Galena • GA
Haines • HA
Hoonah • HO
Hydaburg • HY
Juneau • JU
Kake • KA
Kenai • KE
Ketchikan • KT
Klawock • KL
Kodiak • KO
Lake & Peninsula • LP
Mat-Su • MS
Nenana • NE
Nome • NO
North Slope • NS
Northwest Arctic • NW
Pelican • PL
Petersburg • PT
Sitka • SI
Skagway • SK
St. Mary's • SM
Tanana • TA
Unalaska • UN
Valdez • VA
Wrangell • WR
Yakutat • YA



NOTE: North Slope's revenue per pupil is $15,279.

FIGURE 5

MILL EQUIVALENT OF TAX EFFORT

REQUIRED, ALLOWABLE EXCESS & BUDGETED LOCAL EFFORT

City/Borough abbreviations

Aleutians East • AE
Anchorage • AN
Bristol Bay • BB
Cordova • CO
Craig • CG
Dillingham • DI
Fairbanks • FB
Galena • GA
Haines • HA
Hoonah • HO
Hydaburg • HY
Juneau • JU
Kake • KA
Kenai • KE
Ketchikan • KT
Klawock • KL
Kodiak • KO
Lake & Peninsula • LP
Mat-Su • MS
Nenana • NE
Nome • NO
North Slope • NS
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Pelican • PL
Petersburg • PT
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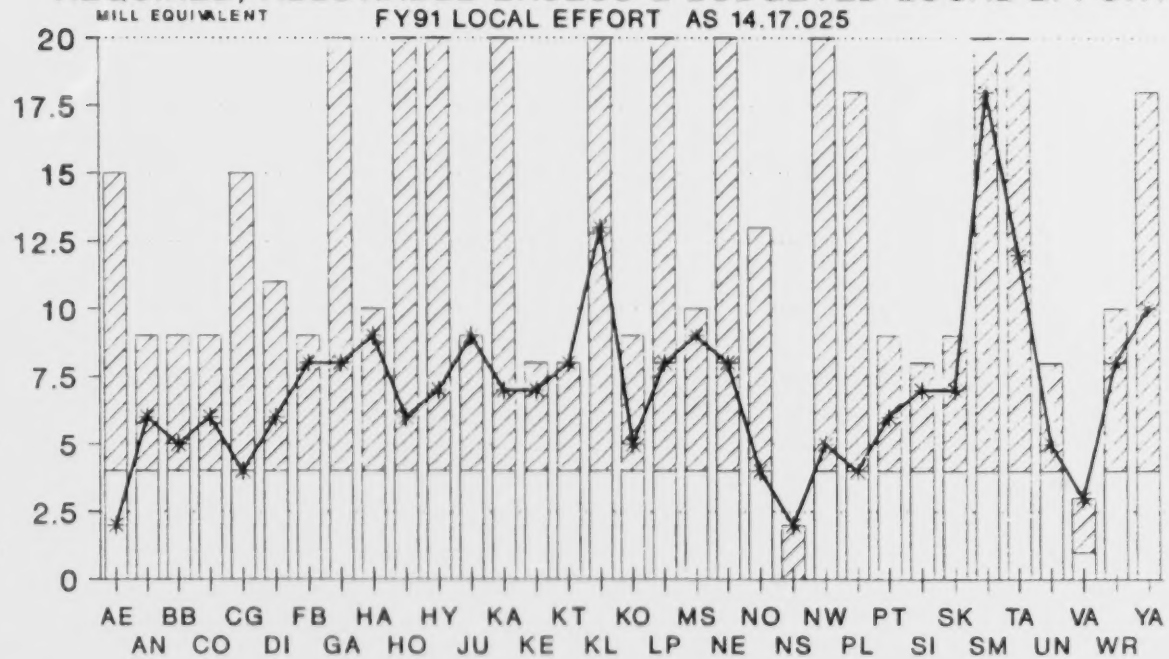


This chart has been limited to 20 mills.

MINIMUM required local effort

ALLOWABLE EXCESS 23% of basic need

LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS FY91 BUDGETED LOCAL REVENUE AS 14.17.250 (7) "LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS"

contributions, although with a limit placed on that amount. The so-called "capping effect" of this provision prohibits districts from raising more than the equivalent of an additional two mill levy on district property or 23% of basic need, whichever is greater. The purpose of this prohibition is to achieve a certain level of equality of resources among districts. This provision otwithstanding, the ten most property poor districts find it necessary to raise funds at the maximum level permitted.

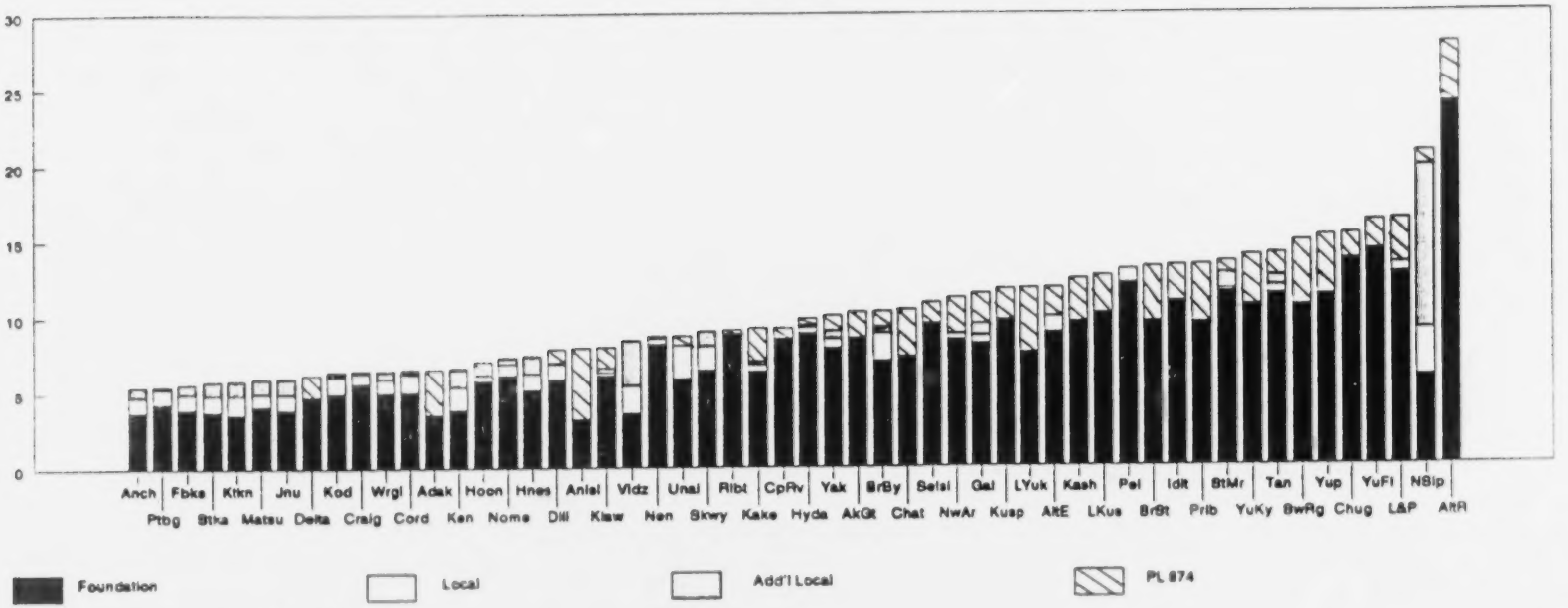
The solid line connecting local contributions in mill equivalents may be the most telling feature in figure 5. It represents the level of support (local effort) levied by each district in 1991. If the current formula effectuated fiscal neutrality the jagged solid line (revealing resource distribution disparity) would be flat. Note that the range of local effort varies from 2 mills and 3 mills in the wealthiest districts to 18 mills in the poorest. The net effect of Chapter 15, as seen in these illustrations, is to require property poor districts to exert substantially greater effort to raise local funds than property rich districts, which are allowed to contribute to their budgets a lower level of effort.

It may be that the fairest, most easily computed, and cost effective way to distribute state wealth so as to achieve fiscal neutrality would be the state to fund 100% of all public education. Such a procedure would, incidentally, leave municipal tax bases free for local needs other than schools.

(As an incidental addendum to figure 5, it should be noted that the Aleution East Borough school district, because it is in a transitional phase from REAA to Borough, is required to raise only the equivalent of 2 mills during its first year of operation. Its local

FIGURE 6

Estimated Per ADM Revenue from All Sources
($ Thousands)


30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Anch Fbks Ktkn Jnu Kod Wrgl Adak Hoon Hnes Anlsl Vldz Unal Ribt CpRv Yak BrBy Selsl Gal LYuk Kash Pel IdR StMr Tan Yup YuFl NSlp
Ptbg Stka Matsu Delta Craig Cord Ken Nome Dill Klaw Nen Skwy Kake Hyda AkGt Chat NwAr Kusp AtE LKus BrSt Prib YuKy BwRg Chug L&P AtR
Foundation
Local
Add'l Local
PL 874

Prepared by the Legislative Research Agency, December 1990 (91-067)

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TABLE 2

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FY91 FOUNDATION PROGRAM AS 14.17.025
LOCAL REVENUES: REQUIRED, ALLOWABLE EXCESS & BUDGETED
12/10/90 BEJ

	ACTUAL FY91 ADM	1989 FULL VALUE DETERMINATION	REQUIRED FY91 LOCAL	ALLOWABLE EXCESS	BUDGETED LOCAL	1 MILL PER ADM	REQUIRED PER ADM	BUDGETED PER ADM	ALLOWABLE PER ADM	REQUIRED MILL EQUIV.	ALLOWABLE MILL EQUIV.	BUDGETED MILL EQUIV.
ALEUTIANS EAST	364	$87,528,600	$350,114	$926,808	$175,057	$240	$962	$481	$3,507	4	11	2
ANCHORAGE	40,533	9,836,722,410	39,346,890	45,054,240	61,067,977	243	971	1,507	2,082	4	5	6
BRISTOL BAY	253	117,937,900	471,752	540,822	645,559	466	1,865	2,552	4,002	4	5	5
CORDOVA	438	122,992,900	491,972	645,978	764,805	281	1,123	1,747	2,599	4	5	6
CRAIG	311	40,178,500	160,714	431,664	159,228	129	517	512	1,907	4	11	4
DILLINGHAM	457	118,601,000	474,404	842,490	710,000	260	1,038	1,554	2,882	4	7	6
FAIRBANKS	14,246	3,398,331,900	13,593,328	16,267,440	27,751,000	239	954	1,948	2,096	4	5	8
GALENA	120	19,585,100	78,340	314,916	155,152	163	653	1,293	3,277	4	16	8
HAINES	433	103,888,200	415,553	642,390	974,801	240	959	2,250	2,442	4	6	9
HOONAH	234	21,586,000	86,344	376,878	137,341	92	369	587	1,980	4	17	6
HYDABURG	108	9,024,100	36,096	234,186	61,459	83	333	567	2,493	4	26	7
JUNEAU	5,124	1,247,450,700	4,989,803	5,801,244	10,744,000	243	974	2,097	2,106	4	5	9
KAKE	179	16,843,800	67,375	305,118	122,592	94	377	686	2,084	4	18	7
KENAI	9,169	3,285,880,710	13,143,523	11,599,590	24,507,607	358	1,433	2,673	2,699	4	4	7
KETCHIKAN	2,693	819,271,400	3,277,086	3,044,832	6,278,771	304	1,217	2,331	2,347	4	4	8
KLAWOCK	202	9,194,000	36,776	335,478	122,000	46	182	604	1,844	4	36	13
KODIAK	2,404	645,143,800	2,580,575	3,409,290	3,316,000	268	1,074	1,379	2,492	4	5	5
LAKE AND PENINSULA	413	60,371,500	241,486	1,420,986	510,000	146	584	1,234	4,023	4	24	8
MATSU	9,460	1,813,556,490	7,254,226	10,826,514	17,038,193	192	767	1,801	1,911	4	6	9
NENANA	196	16,186,800	64,747	378,258	137,343	83	331	701	2,263	4	23	8
NOME	778	137,990,000	551,960	1,263,804	607,960	177	710	781	2,334	4	9	4
NORTH SLOPE	1,359	11,961,774,300	4,335,240	23,923,549	20,770,000	8,799	3,189	15,279	20,788	0	2	2
NORTHWEST ARCTIC	1,582	142,713,800	570,855	3,791,136	750,008	90	361	474	2,757	4	27	5
PELICAN	48	10,440,800	41,763	143,382	41,763	217	866	866	3,841	4	14	4
PETERSBURG	681	162,441,900	649,768	838,212	962,204	238	954	1,413	2,184	4	5	6
SITKA	1,738	446,849,500	1,787,398	1,921,236	3,008,379	257	1,029	1,731	2,134	4	4	7
SKAGWAY	145	54,411,100	217,644	258,060	371,044	376	1,504	2,563	3,286	4	5	7
ST. MARY'S	116	4,184,700	16,739	315,054	76,739	36	145	664	2,870	4	75	18
TANANA	109	11,511,900	46,048	294,216	142,000	106	422	1,303	3,122	4	26	12
UNALASKA	258	116,125,240	464,501	479,826	585,624	450	1,800	2,269	3,659	4	4	5
VALDEZ	762	1,370,370,900	1,464,960	2,740,742	3,449,218	1,797	1,922	4,524	5,516	1	2	3
WRANGELL	509	110,198,000	440,792	671,784	829,284	217	866	1,630	2,186	4	6	8
YAKUTAT	150	19,792,100	79,168	286,212	197,620	132	528	1,317	2,436	4	14	10

contribution during its first year is not based on property wealth of the district.)

Figure 6 summarizes the financial outcome of all of the features of the foundation program. It illustrates the amount of money available from all major sources for school operations per ADM in 1991. These include required local contributions, optional additional contributions, federal P.L. 874 funds, and state foundation entitlements. The amounts budgeted per ADM range from approximately $5,500 per ADM to $28,000 per ADM.

Table two displays those current revenues that are required and those that are optional; also shown are total local funds budgeted for fiscal 1991.

Essentially, the graphs and table illustrate those characteristics of AS 14.17.025 that establish three classes of school districts: municipal districts that must contribute the equivalent of a four mill property tax levy to their annual operational budget; municipal districts that contribute an amount equal to 35 % of basic need for the preceding year to their annual operational budget (placing them at an advantage over other municipal districts); and REAA school districts that make no local contribution to their annual operational budget (giving them an advantage over all municipal districts.) The extreme differentials in expenditure per ADM among districts and the disproportionately high burden of local effort required of property poor districts may partially be explained by economy of size (due to the size of enrollment, small districts are not as efficient as large districts and they are unable to spread fixed costs over as many students as large districts) and regional cost differentials; more likely higher costs per ADM in some districts exist because the current formula frustrates the principal of fiscal neutrality. Article I, Sec. 1 of the Alaska Constitution, provides "...that all persons are equal and entitled to equal rights,

opportunities, and protection under the law." Because of inherent inequities in three financial classes of school districts, this provision may be obstructed. Given this likelihood and the issues listed above, there is broad based support for a comprehensive inquiry of the financial foundation program.

Furthermore, another matter that compounds the problem of providing equity in the finance system is reliance on regional cost differentials computed from household cost-of-living data rather than data that may more closely reflect the costs of operating a school district. The current system of determining regional cost differentials is not thought to be an accurate measure of true costs among school districts. A recent study by the McDowell Group, based on costs of maintaining schools instead of households, may provide improved equity in this area. It remains to be applied, if found to be appropriate, to the foundation formula.

Two issues of lesser magnitude that do not concern the state as a whole, but are troublesome to the districts affected nonetheless, revolve around the problems of economy of scale. Because of the small average daily membership (ADM) and geographic isolation of some single and dual site city school districts, extraordinarily high costs present special problems. (Legislation to alleviate some of the problems attributed to small size, passed in the last session, allows for voluntary co-operation among districts through joint service contracts. But this measure may only partially relieve problems associated with being a small and isolated district.)

Furthermore, it is claimed that the schedule in Chapter 15 used to determine the number of instructional units in geographically large borough districts which contain isolated, single school site communities results in inequitable distribution of state money. Both of these issues, however, are minor compared to the other state-

wide inequities explained above. Inadequacies in single and dual site district funding and in small communities in geographically large, rural districts may be resolved by applying suggestions such as those currently offered by the Alaska Association of School Administrators. (As a stop-gap measure, the Joint Committee endorses the association's position.) The Association's position paper on this and other school finance issues is attached as Appendix F.

While the forgoing discussion deals with inequities in funds for school district operations through the foundation program, it should be pointed out that inequities also exist in the distribution of state funds for capital improvements. Municipal school districts are obliged to meet a portion of their capital improvements expenses; REAAs are not, thereby establishing two classes of districts in this regard.

The National Conference of State Legislatures has posed four questions that a state legislature should examine when the need for revision in its school finance structure becomes apparent. They are:

1) What fiscal inequities result from the present system?

2) What are the causes of such problems?

3) What can be done to remedy the inequities?

4) What will be the fiscal impact of proposed aid reforms?

To answer all four questions requires assembling data on the present system, analyzing that data, designing new alternatives, and evaluating the effects of those alternatives on the system. [19]The following outline designed by the National Conference of State Legislatures suggests what needs to be done to meet these requirements.

AN OUTLINE FOR THE ANALYSIS OF PRESENT AND PROPOSED FUTURE SCHOOL FINANCE STRUCTURES

I. Description of the present system

A. Statewide maximum, minimum, average, standard deviation for:

Current expenditure per pupil
Equalized property value per pupil
Equalized school tax rate
State aid per pupil

B. Proportion of educational revenues derived from local, state, and federal sources

C. Comparisons with national patterns and other states (Expenditures, incomes, source of revenues, state and local tax payments per capita)

D. Extent of disparities in expenditures, property wealth, school tax rates (Rank orders, bar graphs, comparisons of extreme or groups of districts)

E. Differences in expenditures between 5th and 95th percentile

F. Declining or increasing enrollment (Past trends, future projections for the entire state and for individual districts)

II. Analysis of disparities and problems in the current system.

A. Patterns of disparity in school expenditures, school tax rates and property wealth (Region, size, type of community)

B. Sources of expenditure inequities (Expenditures vs. income; expenditures vs.

property wealth; state aid; federal aid vs. property wealth)

C. Sources of tax inequities (School tax rate expenditures; school tax rate vs. property wealth; school tax payments vs. income)

D. Interrelationships among district characteristics (property wealth, school tax rate, expenditures, income, size, region type of community)

E. Patterns of declining [or increasing] enrollment (Drop [or increase] in enrollment vs. property wealth, income, school tax rate, expenditures, size, type of community, region)

F. Impact of providing other local services, (education expenditures vs. other local expenditures or proportion of local property tax levy devoted to other services; school tax rate vs. proportion of local levy devoted to education; type of community vs. property wealth per capita, school tax rate, total tax rate; proportion of local levy or budget devoted to education)

G. Effects of expenditure disparities (Expenditures vs. school characteristics and educational outcomes)

III. Analysis of impact of alternative new programs

A. Projection for each district:

New expenditure for each district
New school tax rate
New state aid per pupil
Increase [or decrease] in state aid per pupil
Increase [or decrease] in total state aid

Analysis for Entire State:

B. Increase or decrease in cost (Total and by program)

C. New levels of expenditures and tax rates (Maximum, minimum, average, standard deviation)

D. New proportion of educational revenues derived from local, state, and federal sources

E. Extent of disparity in new expenditures and new school tax rates (See I.D.)

F. Sources of variations in expenditures and school tax rates (New expenditures, new school tax rates vs. region, size, type of community, property wealth, income, educational needs, costs)

G. Rank ordering of districts on the basis of their gains or loss from new program (By total change in state aid and in school tax rates).[20]

In the past the legislature has declared it to be its policy to provide an equitable level of educational opportunity through its financial foundation program. The activities (assembling and analyzing data, and designing alternatives and evaluating their effects) called for in this outline will enable the legislature to determine how well it is currently fulfilling that policy.

Current Issues in School Governance

Issues concerning the governance of schools have always been with us, and as processes of education have grown more complex, so too have the issues. Governance, and its related subject, organization, are fairly straightforward terms. Governance

authority and the means (usually money and political influence) to exercise that authority. Organization, the environment of an enterprise, is the setting in which decisions are made, leadership exercised, and routine tasks carried out.

Governance topics are at issue today primarily because of the loss of confidence in the educational establishment as a whole and because of tangled and overlapping school district boundaries among the three classes of districts. Arriving at a satisfactory system of governance is further aggravated because different regions of Alaska with disparate physical, economic, and social characteristics may have unlike needs. School *restructuring*, the current catchall term or cliche frequently used to claim solutions for a host of schooling problems, generally revolves around school governance issues. These are being debated in nearly every state of the country, in some cases with proposals for solutions nothing short of drastic and revolutionary. And although *restructuring* as a term may be used excessively, it is descriptive and has significance. (A review of major education restructuring now currently underway in other states appears in the paper "Education Legislation," attached as Appendix G).

All of the governance issues listed below have been included in this report because they tenaciously persist as unresolved problems. As with issues in school finance, some are broader in scope than others, and some are more contentious than others. But all are sources of tension among the various factions competing for authority to control the process and outcomes of schooling. Posed as questions, the following issues appear to be the most vexing and most in need of immediate attention.

1) Is Alaska's policy of delegating decision-making authority to three different organizational systems (city, borough, and REAA school districts), often with overlapping

boundaries, the most practical, efficient, and equitable organizational arrangement available to the legislature? It appears not to be.

2) What reasons make it necessary to delegate decision-making authority by creating districts within districts, such as small REAAs within large REAAs or small city districts within REAAs? Do these reasons justify the expense and inefficiency inherent in this arrangement? The general impression is that they do not.

3) Should REAAs continue to exist in their present form? As now constituted they are nothing more than service districts in the unorganized borough? When established they were considered to be the product of a temporary, transitional measure awaiting a more authoritative organizational structure. Fifteen years later they are anomalous units of governmental structure, firmly in place.

4) Should some districts be merged with others to provide better economy of scale and more efficient distribution of administrative responsibilities?

5) If consolidating and merging school districts are solutions to current problems in governance and organization, should these activities be mandated or encouraged (through incentives, perhaps) through voluntary intra-district cooperation?

6) Should advisory school boards, especially in small and remote communities, be delegated legal decision-making authority? There has been widespread testimony that they should be.

7) Is the decision-making authority of the state board of education and/or the Commissioner of Education and their authority to require school district compliance with regulations sufficient? Does the role of the state board of education need to be strengthened?

8) Are current provisions for secondary schooling in rural areas with small enrollments adequate and cost effective; especially are high schools with limited resources sufficient to meet the needs of high school graduates today? Is it necessary to initiate a new generation of regional high schools to expand and improve existing programs? If so, how should they be constituted, where should they be located, and what should be their governance mechanism?

9) Should the state system of public education be extended to a "13th year" to provide "developmental education" for students not able to cope with higher education, or because of functional illiteracy are unemployable? If implemented, should this extension be the responsibility of the public school system, the University of Alaska, or a combination of the two? How might existing University of Alaska and school system programs and facilities provide for this group of students (especially those in the rural areas)?

10) Should decision-making authority, the locus of control (especially in matters affecting curriculum, internal institutional structure, budgets, staff qualifications and hiring practices, promotions, school calendar, and use of facilities), be shifted (devolved) from central district offices to individual schools? Should principals,

> teachers, and residents in their immediate communities be delegated authority in areas now held by local boards and central administrations? In brief, these questions ask, is school-site-based management a viable option in Alaska? Increasingly there is support for decision-making authority to be devolved so that there can be more school-level personnel and parent involvement in schooling processes.

The issue of feasibility and desirability of site-based school management focuses some of the issues raised above. Providing more legal decision-making authority at school sites has the potential to lead to substantial school improvements according to some observers; to others the shift is unworkable. Taken to its limits, site-based management, or "empowered schools" as the concept is sometimes called, requires that decision-making authority for most school policies and practices dealing with instruction and management be devolved to teachers, principals, and local community groups. To do so would change the roles of school district boards and superintendents (where the traditional factory model chain of command from the top down is the general practice) by reducing their authority. Thomas B. Timar of Harvard University and David L. Kirp of the Graduate School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley have described how this shift might be accomplished:

> The most important conclusion that we can draw from state reform efforts is that a major shift in policy needs to occur. Policy makers must focus their attention on making schools better places in which to work.... A theory of institutional support must be based on... [the] premise that schools as institutions are the principal targets of reform. Tightening curricular standards and ratcheting up certification requirements, for example, may mean nothing if the schools lack the organizational competence to make use of improved curricula and better-qualified teachers....

> Authority and responsibility have to be distributed and differentiated across the entire system of education. The states have the responsibility to establish clear expectations [The Alaska legislature did just that last year.] and a general educational framework.... Authority at the local level needs to be decentralized at the school site. A theory of institutional support is anchored in the conviction that everyone in schools is responsible for planning, for budgeting, and for program evaluation. Budgets are tied to assessment and diagnosis, targeting money where it most needed. Responsibility is not segmented and parceled out among a host of players. For schools to take responsibility for their own efficacy means that schools must behave as purposive organizations rather than as shopping malls--mere conglomerations of marginally related activity centers. [25]

Obviously changes to this extent have the potential for strife and tension among the people affected unless adequate planning precedes transfers in levels of authority and unless decision-making authority is unequivocally transferred. To make this change or any others that alter the existing system, the legislature must clarify the policies and the means required to carry them out.

The scope and complexity of school governance and organization give credibility to the conclusion that if anything is to be done in this sphere to improve school performance it cannot be done piecemeal; schools are tangled institutions, governed by many traditional rules and shaped by many factors, not the least of which is political expediency. John E. Chubb of the Brookings Institute has elaborated on this concept this way:

> [The] institutional structure and character [of schools] is shaped by their environment--by their relationship with parents, of course, but more pertinently by the way they are controlled, by their connections to administrative and political superiors. Those organizational qualities that we consider to be essential ingredients of an effective school--such things as academically focused objectives, pedagogically strong principals, relatively autonomous teachers, and collegial staff relations--do not flourish

> without the willingness of superintendents, school boards, and other outside authorities to delegate meaningful control over school policy, personnel, and practices to the school itself. Efforts to improve the performance of schools without changing the way they are organized or the controls they respond to will therefore probably meet with no more than modest success; they are even more likely to be undone.
>
> This unfortunately poses a dilemma for improving the performance of public schools. Significant gains in student achievement may well require basic changes in the ways schools are governed and organized--in the authority entrusted to them, the objectives imposed upon them and the professional discretion they are granted. [21]

The opportunity given the Joint Committee to examine school performance in Alaska has led to the conclusion that the dilemma posed by Chubb is an Alaskan dilemma, but not one that is insurmountable. As revealed by the nature and number of issues in school governance identified in this report, it can be assumed that the current system of delegating decision-making authority among three types of school districts is far from the equitable or optimal system it should be. And although there is widespread discontent with several aspects of the present system, in part because of what is perceived to be ineffectual and inefficient management and arbitrary and illogical dimensions of some school district boundaries, little attention has been focused on what will be required to still the criticism.

However, a model for institutional support that balances state objectives with local initiatives and takes into account the needs of teachers, administrators, and local school board members in their collective efforts to improve school performance is theoretically attainable. Alaska has the means and the people to bring about the necessary changes. Whether or not it is politically feasible will depend on the extent to which the legislature puts the need for long term and substantive school reform above more limited and immediate interests.

Recommendations In School Finance and Governance

The way decision-making authority is delegated and distributed and the adequacy of financial support provided to schools will be among the most telling outcomes of efforts to improve Alaska schools. Too often school finance and governance issues have been examined independently of each other and at times "fine tuned" in a superficial way. ***School finance and governance simply are not independent variables; when one is altered, the other absolutely will change, whether planned or not.*** And it is clear that fine tuning the system is no longer sufficient, if it ever was.

Thus the ultimate question under the heading of school finance and governance asks: Is the state allocating financial resources and installing local authority over decisions in the most effective and equitable way? Testimony and study leave the impression that it is not. But before this pronouncement can be universally accepted and alternative systems proposed, they must be authenticated; questions posed in this report must be answered definitively. Answers will establish the rationale necessary to design a system of education that is faithful to the principles of equity and equal educational opportunity so necessary to meet the educational needs of all children and youth. The state should then be confident that it has established as close to the ideal organizational arrangement as is possible and that it is allocating the optimal amount of financial resources required for schools to meet the needs of each individual student and the needs of society as a whole.

One of the reasons for including the section on historic perspectives earlier in this chapter is to illustrate that Alaska's systems of school finance and governance are not static; they are the product of evolution, adjusting over time to accommodate changes in societal values and the need for an educated populace to keep pace in a complex, cosmopolitan, and technological world. However, when an education system fails to keep pace with the changing needs of individuals and society, it becomes necessary for the legislature to determine what needs to be changed. *That time is at hand.*

Accordingly, the Joint Committee on School Performance recommends:

> ***that the legislature, in recognition of the urgency of the need for improved school performance, initiate a thorough investigation of the school finance and governance systems of Alaska public education. It is further recommended that this work be conducted as a legislative "in-house study" (utilizing the resources of the Department of Education when required) and that it be carried out under the auspices of a newly created joint committee on school performance (as recommended in Chapter Three). The study shall include answers to the questions posed in this report and propose a system of governance and a financial foundation formula in agreement with the findings. The committee shall report its findings and make its proposals no later than January 1993.***

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

No matter how well-thought-out and executed an equitably financed and organizationally well-restructured education system may be, it will fail to result in improved school performance if it lacks teachers who are well-educated, motivated, and respected. Much of the education reform movement during the past decade has been focused on improving the quality of teacher performance through improved professional development. Over 1000 pieces of legislation regarding teachers were enacted during the 1980s. As pointed out by Michael W. Sedlak:

> Reformers have attempted to change public education from the top down with mandates to address a particular problem; with rules, procedures, and standards generated to facilitate goal attainment; and with monitoring and evaluation to assess progress. What has been missing has been an appreciation of how such programs would actually affect the daily lives of students and teachers.[22]

Edward Meade, who several years ago was the Ford Foundation program officer in charge of the Foundation's school improvement projects, observed that in many programs the Foundation had sponsored, the complexity of improving schools had been underestimated. The Foundation learned, according to Meade, that "the ultimate innovator in schools was the teacher [and] lasting and significant changes would not occur unless teachers were directly and actively involved in the planning and development of the desired changes." [23]

Reinforcing this concept are calls for reform from outside the profession. Owen Butler, former chairman of Procter and Gamble, speaking as chairperson of the national Committee for Economic Development, described the effort for improved school performance from a businessman's point of view:

> We are trying to change from a system in which teachers are regarded as almost assembly-line classroom production workers to a system in which teachers are free to innovate and experiment and use creativity to improve teaching. We are trying to deregulate, to move the control of the schools from the top-down to the bottom-up. We are trying to provide better financing and attract better people into the profession. This requires a total change in the "corporate structure."[24]

Although having started "at the top" in its recommendations for ways to bring about improved school performance, the Joint Committee is aware of the danger of limiting its efforts to that level. The Committee finds general agreement with the positions taken by Sedlak, Meade, and Butler. Issues in this report concerning school district accountability, finance, and governance, for example, should not obscure the actuality that most of what comes to bear on schooling from the top eventually affects the classroom and does so significantly. It is the extent of teacher efficacy, the capacity to produce the desired effects, that will determine the success of the outcomes sought at other levels.

Historically Alaska has been more progressive than many states in the way it has selected teachers, certified them, and, in some instances, trained them. However, and although it is generally recognized that the aggregate of Alaska's current teaching force is among the best trained and competent in the nation, the right to retain its historic claim to excellence has been acutely eroded in recent years. Teacher shortages, primarily in rural schools where there currently is an annual teacher turnover rate of 30%, have made it necessary to recruit teachers who do not have the background to succeed under the demanding conditions found in many Alaska schools. Approximately 900 vacancies had to be filled in Alaska's schools in 1989-1990, but fewer than 20% of those vacancies were filled with graduates of teacher training programs in Alaska.

Furthermore, and more to the issues at hand, demands placed on teachers in general, rural and urban, because of an exploding knowledge base and a decline in the traditional family-oriented society of previous generations, make it necessary to have a body of teachers better educated and trained than ever before. Unique and extraordinary personal traits, knowledge, sensitivity, and ability are essential if teachers are to meet the challenges contemporary Alaska society places on them. The ways these characteristics are defined and the processes by which they may be identified or instilled in those who choose to teach are the focal points around which issues in professional development revolve. Thus, the quality of teacher performance as a result of teacher education and professional training, the provisions for teacher certification, and the teacher tenure laws are the topics most often at issue in the subject of professional development.

Teacher Education and Professional Training

As pointed out by Anne Lewis of the American Association of School Administrators, "Schools cannot be restructured unless training for the profession also undergoes radical changes."[27] During the past decade many reports from some of the most prestigious government and private institutions have called for substantial changes in the way teachers are trained. Among the reports, those that have come from the Holmes Group (an extensive consortium of deans of education from 123 of the country's colleges and universities, including the University of Alaska), the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, and the Education Commission of the States emphatically support the need for reform in teacher education. In the *Journal of Teacher Education* (May-June 1987), Edith Guyton and George Antonelli summarized the recommendations common to these and many other reports issued in the past few years:

1. Raise standards for admission to teacher education and the teaching profession.

2. Move professional education of teachers to the post-baccalaureate level.

3. Revise the teacher education curriculum, particularly to incorporate research findings.

4. Make efforts to enhance the prestige of and respect for teachers and the teaching profession.

5. Engage Arts and Sciences faculty in the teacher education program.[28]

These five recommendations are considered not only to be keys to improved teacher efficacy everywhere but also to be particularly appropriate to professional development in Alaska, especially with regard to moving professional education of teachers to the post-baccalaureate level. Altogether, the effect that is sought is that of a restructured school system that significantly improves education in the classroom. To achieve this objective, teachers who work in those classrooms need to be the best and the brightest available. They will not be if they are not more critically screened at the time they make application to teacher training programs and if they are not more academically challenged during their university experience.

The most recent study of the way teachers are educated, the "Study of the Education of Educators" (one of the most extensive investigations on this subject ever conducted) adds yet another dimension to the debate over what should constitute an adequate education for teachers. Carried out at the University of Washington under the leadership of John I. Goodlad over a five-year period, the investigation was completed in 1990. A fundamental part of the study was this question: "How might schooling and teacher education be productively linked?". Goodlad summarized findings from the study, in response to this question, this way:

> In setting out to study the education of educators in a representative sample of colleges and universities, my colleagues and I concluded that teacher education should be geared to reasonable expectations for those who are to be stewards of schooling in a democratic society.
>
> We postulated four broad categories of expectations --the legs of the stool on which teaching as a profession rests. First, teachers must understand that citizenship is the primary political office under a constitutional government, and they must possess a foundation of knowledge about the nation's government and its expectations for citizens. Second, teachers must have the intellectual tools to participate broadly in the human conversation and to introduce young people to it. Third, teachers must possess the pedagogical knowledge and skills necessary to arrange optimal conditions for educating the young. Fourth, teachers must thoroughly understand the common-places of schooling (goals, clients, organization, curriculum, instruction, and evaluation), promising alternatives, the nature of healthy schools, and how to sustain renewal.[29]

The current debate in teacher education revolves around how such an ideal combination of traits in all teachers can be achieved. Moreover, nearly all of the school improvement reports of the past few years, especially those of the Carnegie Forum, Holmes Group, and Education Commission of the State, have called in unequivocal terms for strengthening liberal arts foundations as a prerequisite for the professional study of teaching. It is reasonable to assume that if teachers are to measure up to the four categories of expectations called for by Goodlad, they must be liberally educated, although not at the expense of training in sound pedagogical knowledge and skills. This call for an education of breadth and depth among educators implies that teacher education programs, regardless of the forms eventually agreed to, will require more effort and time than in years past.

At the turn of 19th century, graduation from eighth grade was all that was require to be hired as a teacher. Later, graduation from high school became the standard to become an elementary teacher, followed a few years afterward by the need to possess a diploma from a two-year "normal school." It was not until after World War II that all states required graduation from a four-year teacher education program to become a certificated teacher. Although many candidates for a teaching credential (especially high school teachers) now complete requirements for a four-year B.A. or B.S. degree before going into teacher education, the norm is a four-year program as a student for a Bachelor of Education degree with an endorsement in elementary or secondary teaching. Now, however, in consideration of the rapid development of a more thoroughly educated and technically specialized society, it is essential that the education of teachers advance no less rapidly.

Despite the consensus that there is an urgent need to upgrade the level of education of future teachers, the components of an ideal teacher education program remain at issue. Most large research-oriented universities favor requiring that prospective teachers first must have a B.A. or B.S. degree in a solid subject matter discipline before starting professional teacher education training. Smaller, possibly less secure, institutions have been reluctant to support the movement at the same level of assertiveness because they do not have the resources to make such a monumental change. In Alaska where this requirement has received considerable study and debate at every campus, the movement has not gone beyond the appraisal stage. (It has been suggested that no Alaska campus has the resources necessary to effect this change or no campus is willing to take the first step toward implementation lest it lose a competitive edge in the recruitment of students who are unwilling, financially unable, or lack

undertake a longer and more academically demanding program.)

Although Alaska schools require teachers to be thoroughly educated along lines proposed in most recent national reports, the need for teachers who have been trained in programs specifically designed for Alaska's distinctive conditions and multicultural population is a separate but equally imperative problem. Unfortunately such programs remain elusive on a sustained, institutionally supported basis. Alaska-specific programs developed in the past have not produced sufficient numbers of appropriately prepared teachers, and they still do not. A shortage of teachers sensitive to the needs of their students and well trained in the theories and techniques required in a multicultural society persists. Earlier programs that were judged to be effective and should by now be routinely available to both pre-service and in-service teachers are no longer available. Recent innovative programs, especially programs intended to improve school performance in rural areas or to increase the number of Alaska Natives in the teaching force, have not attained the momentum, financial means, or credibility necessary to become routinely offered. Although some early programs did not deserve to be continued and some current proposals may lack substance, inadequate funding, university personnel with insufficient backgrounds, or lack of institutional commitment are the more frequent causes for scantness of teacher training programs in Alaska. It has become incumbent on the legislature to provide incentives that will help to overcome these limitations.

Teacher Certification

Teacher certification is as integral to the professional development of teachers as teacher education. Among the many topics in public education now at issue nationally, certification of teaches is one of the most frequently debated. To focus the elements of this debate, The National Center for Education Information published, in 1990, *Alternative Teacher Certification: A State-By-State Analysis,* in which detailed descriptions of alternative teacher certification practices across the country are reported. Table 3, showing the extent of activity among the states regarding alternative routes for certifying teachers, summarizes data from that report. Only three states, Alaska, North Dakota, and Rhode Island, are shown on the table under the heading "not considering" alternative routes.

However, the author of the report points out the difficulty of obtaining the most recent information from the states due to rapidly changing policies across the country. Aince the Alaska legislature last year had under consideration (but failed to pass) CSHB 203, an act relating to requirements for limited teacher certificates Alaska might have more appropriately been shown in the table under the column headed "considering" alternative routes. Regardless of this aspect of the table, it can be said that the Alaska state board of education is not at the forefront of the nationwide movement exploring innovative proposals in teacher certification. This observation is supported by the following excerpts from the National Center for Education Information's report.

> Alternative teacher certification is not only a much debated topic but is also the center of much activity in American education....
>
> The National Center for Education Information (NCEI) has been asking the state directors of teacher education

TABLE 3

STATUS OF STATES REGARDING ALTERNATIVE ROUTES FOR CERTIFYING TEACHERS

STATE	Considering	Proposed	Implementing	Not Considering
ALABAMA			X	
ALASKA				X
ARIZONA			X	
ARKANSAS			X	
CALIFORNIA			X	
COLORADO			X	
CONNECTICUT			X	
DELAWARE	X			
D.C.	X			
FLORIDA			X	
GEORGIA			X	
HAWAII			X	
IDAHO			X	
ILLINOIS	X			
INDIANA	X			
IOWA	X			
KANSAS	X			
KENTUCKY			X	
LOUISIANA			X	
MAINE			X	
MARYLAND			X	
MASSACHUSETTS			X	
MICHIGAN	X			
MINNESOTA	X			
MISSISSIPPI			X	
MISSOURI			X	
MONTANA	X			
NEBRASKA			X	
NEVADA		X		
NEW HAMPSHIRE			X	
NEW JERSEY			X	
NEW MEXICO			X	
NEW YORK			X	
NORTH CAROLINA			X	
NORTH DAKOTA				X
OHIO			X	
OKLAHOMA			X	
OREGON			X	
PENNSYLVANIA			X	
RHODE ISLAND				X
SOUTH CAROLINA			X	
SOUTH DAKOTA	X			
TENNESSEE			X	
TEXAS			X	
UTAH		X		
VERMONT			X	
VIRGINIA			X	
WASHINGTON	X			
WEST VIRGINIA			X	
WISCONSIN	X			
WYOMING	X			

and certification about their status regarding alternatives to the traditional college approved teacher education program route to certification since 1983. In that year, eight states said they were "implementing alternatives." When asked the question in 1990, 33 states reported they were implementing alternatives.

About a third of the states that say they are implementing an alternative teacher certification route have tied alternative teacher certification to teacher shortages, that is, the alternative program is available only if a traditionally certified teacher cannot be found....

There is considerable similarity in the "requirements to enter" for alternative route programs and for other programs offered in all the states. Basically, if one has a bachelor's degree, at least a C+ college grade point average, has passed a basic skills test, and often a subject speciality area test, one is eligible in almost every state [but not in Alaska] to enter some type of certification program other than going back to college and completing a traditional approved college teacher preparation program before becoming certified to teach.

The real variations among certification routes show up in what happens from the time one is granted a regular teaching certificate--and the variations are enormous--from granting full certification based on transcript and resume analysis to requiring that a person complete a traditional approved college teacher preparation program over time....

Several states issue the candidate some type of temporary or provisional certificate that allows him or her to get a teaching job, begin teaching right away, as long as he or she enrolls in a college of education that has an approved teacher education program and finishes all the requirements of a regular college approved teacher education program over time. The amount of time states allow a person to finish all such course requirements varies, but most states issue one-year temporary certificates which can be renewed as long as the candidate completes at least six semester hours of professional education courses per year. The total number of semester hours that must be completed in such arrangements also varies. The average is 18 semester hours on a college campus. Often the student teaching requirement is waived in lieu of demonstration of "successful" teaching experience.

> Still other states that report they are implementing an alternative teacher certification route and require that a candidate get a teaching job--or at least commitment to be hired--also allow the person to be hired as a full-time teacher but stipulate that they go through a specially designed professional education and training program. Again, there are tremendous variations in these types of programs. In some, the new teachers are assigned mentors; in others, they are not. In some, the formal courses they take are offered by a college of education; in others, by the school district; in still others, by a combination of college, school district and even business. The amount of "coursework" varies and is defined differently in different states.
>
> Some states that report they are implementing alternative teacher certification routes have, in fact, allowed the institutions of higher education in their state to design alternative programs within the university. Others have given the universities very specific guidelines to use in the development of such alternative programs; others have allowed their institutions of higher education considerable leeway in the design of alternatives to their traditional teacher education programs.
>
> A few states use what they call "transcript analysis" as an alternative route, that is, they analyze an applicant's transcript and, in some cases, resume, and decide whether or not the person is qualified to become certified to teach or what specifically one needs to do in order to become fully certified.[26]

As the Center's report attests, exceptionality has become a legitimate consideration when teacher certification qualifications are legislated. And Alaska, as much as any state, needs teachers with extraordinary skills (alternatives to traditional teacher skills) and experiential backgrounds. Being in need of teachers who have these qualifications will require certification policies that take them into account. Provisions for alternative certification, it is argued, increase the pool of prospective teachers with expertise out of the ordinary, keeping in mind that Alaska is now only training approximately 20% of the new teachers hired each year. Such provisions, however, should be looked upon as the means to augment the teaching force, not supplant it; the need for traditionally

well-educated and trained teachers remains high. The challenge in Alaska will be to develop policies that accommodate both traditional and alternative routes to certification without jeopardizing the integrity of either.

Teacher Tenure

There is a dearth of literature on the subject of tenure in the current school reform movement. Nevertheless, the subject repeatedly comes up in a few circles in Alaska, notably among members of teacher, school administrator and school board associations. While not considered a subject that bears on the quality of school performance as much as those discussed elsewhere in this report, provisions for tenure are a perennial problem among both critics and advocates of the present system. Although the Committee heard little testimony on the subject, pro or con, it is a matter that should be addressed in this report, if only briefly, to put it at rest for a time.

Kirp and Yudof in *Educational Policy and the Law* succinctly describe the essentials of tenure.

> Tenure laws and regulations seek to make faculty members secure in their positions by severely limiting the circumstances in which they can be discharged. Generally, they provide for a specified probationary period, usually from three to seven years, after which the teacher is evaluated and either given or denied tenure status. In institutions of higher education, the faculty tends to be deeply involved in this evaluation. In elementary and secondary schools, administrators and school board members make decisions without faculty participation. In theory, at least, tenure is not a form of absolute job security; a tenured teacher may be dismissed before retirement for a variety of reasons: adequate cause, gross misconduct, neglect of duty, mental or physical incapacity, moral turpitude or

> financial emergency. The teacher expects, however, to serve until retirement, barring extraordinary circumstances.[30]

Although not necessarily considered crucial issues in the professional development of teachers, tenure issues are found in the following questions: What is the relevance of tenure in public schools in light of other job protection laws? Should tenure, once granted, apply building wide, district wide, or statewide? What are the merits of and problems associated with the two-year probationary period, as now provided in Alaska law, before tenure is earned? Should it be longer? What would be the consequences of extending the probationary period for teachers on teacher performance?

Although all of these questions deserve informed debate, because there was infrequent reference to tenure as an issue during the life of the Joint Committee comment on the above issues is reserved for another day. There is, however, one exception. It involves the length of the probationary period required before tenure is granted. This subject has been raised often enough among teacher organizations and school boards to require comment by the Committee.

Extending the probationary period would be in line with longer periods of time required in other states and in all probability be fairer to teachers and school boards alike. If qualifying for tenure involves professional development, teachers deserve an opportunity to prove their worth over a period longer than two years, and administrators deserve a longer time to assist in the development of promising but late-blooming teachers.

Peripheral but appropriate to the subject of tenure is the topic of teacher competency testing. Much emphasis throughout the country is being placed on testing teachers to determine their fitness

to teach, especially as measured by mandatory teacher competency tests. All but six states, Alaska being among these, have one form or another of competency testing for teachers. (As recently as 1980 only ten states required testing of elementary and secondary teachers.) Experience with the tests has been mixed. Generally, teachers have had little trouble passing them, but in some states the practice has caused a rift between boards and teachers, especially where the reliability of the tests has been questioned. The subject is infrequently discussed in Alaska, but interest is increasing as the topic becomes better known.

At present a policy of sound in-service training and professional support for beginning teachers over a period of time greater than two years is preferable to the uncertainties of mandatory teacher testing as a screening device for potentially inadequate teachers. Likewise, such a policy would enable administrators to have the opportunity to assist new teachers to adjust to their responsibilities over a longer period. The result would probably reduce the criticism administrators are now subject to regarding claims over arbitrarily dismissing marginal teachers after inadequate teacher evaluations during the probationary period before tenure is granted.

Recommendations in Professional Development of School Personnel

Improved school performance is obviously dependent on well-qualified personnel. To be well qualified, teachers depend on high quality education and teacher training programs in institutions of higher education. The public depends on fair certification laws to assure that teachers are well qualified. It is also important, however, that well qualified candidates to be teachers are not denied access

to the profession because of narrowly constructed regulations. Teachers depend on fair tenure laws to be secure in their positions. As it becomes more critical that issues in these topics be resolved, seven recommendations under the heading of professional development of school personnel are set forth below.

In the matter of teacher education and training it is recommended:

1. *that a BA or BS degree in a subject matter discipline be a prerequisite for admission to a professional teacher education program at all campuses of the University of Alaska.*

2. *that teacher training programs that prepare new teachers and upgrade in-service teachers for assignment in village schools be standard offerings of the University of Alaska system and routinely available as a means to qualify candidates for teacher certificate endorsements appropriate to recommendation number 6 below. (pertaining to village teaching).*

3. that the University of Alaska prepare detailed estimates of the funding that will be required to carry out the prior two recommendations, to be made available to the legislature no later than January 15, 1992.

In the matter of teacher certification, it is recommended:

4. *that legislation be enacted relating to requirements for limited teacher certificates for the purpose of providing teachers in certain limited fields where baccalaureate degree training is not sufficiently available, so long as the person demonstrates both subject matter expertise and teaching competency.*

5. that the legislature, by resolution, instruct the state board of education to investigate the feasibility and desirability of setting into place alternative certification routes for candidates entering teaching from other fields not covered in recommendation number 1 under this heading.

6. that the legislature, by resolution, urge the state board of education to adopt a tiered system of certification that distinguishes between competencies necessary to teach in rural, multicultural communities (Alaska villages) and traditional, urban teaching assignments.

In the matter of tenure, it is recommended:

7. that the existing tenure law be changed. Sec. 14.20.150 (2) presently requires teachers to be "employed as a teacher in the same district continuously for <u>two</u> full school years and is reemployed for the school year immediately following the two full years." The Committee proposes the following alteration: "employed as a teacher in the same district continuously for five full school years and is reemployed for the school year immediately following the <u>five</u> full years."

PROGRAM DEFINITION AND CURRICULA

Strengthened curricula and innovative programs of instruction can be among the most promising components of the school improvement movement. Accordingly, who decides what is to be taught and the content of what students are to be taught have become the focus of reform in many states. Notable in this movement have been efforts to concentrate responsibility for curriculum design at the state level, require more rigorous content of

subject matter, put greater emphasis on thinking skills, and integrate an otherwise compartmentalized curriculum.

Although determining the scope and content of the schools' curricula and developing its instructional programs are among the most important activities of any school system, the question of what schools must teach is not an immediate concern of the Joint Committee on School Performance, except for one topic discussed below. Experience from other states has shown that legislatively mandated curricula and instructional programs have seldom resulted in improved school performance. More often than not this practice has obstructed development of needed innovative programs by limiting options and hampering creative teachers by taking up limited time and resources.

With few exceptions, historically it has been the practice of the Alaska legislature to defer decisions affecting curricula and programs of instruction in the public schools to others. By declaring state purposes of education, as was done by the legislature in HB469, and by prescribing outcomes of education necessary for Alaska students to succeed in adult life, as was done by the state board of education last year, the state has introduced policies that express what it is that schools are expect to achieve. These policies have set the tone for school performance; they do not prescribe how they are to be carried out.

Alaska studies in grades K-12 need to be a notable exception to the legislature's practice to forgo enactment of statutes that prescribe curricula and school programs. Legislation that would underscore the importance of all citizens being well informed in the history of Alaska, its economic development, its political systems, its geography and resources, and the cultural heritage of its various ethnic groups is in order. The state board of education has considered the issue of Alaska studies for many years, but out of

deference to local school boards, holds the position that the state should do no more than produce a model curriculum rather than mandate one. A review of this subject, prepared by the state Department of Education in October, 1990, recounts recent historical actions in this debate:

> In 1988 the legislature passed a resolution requesting that the State Board of Education adopt regulations requiring at least one unit of credit in the study of Alaska history and government for graduation. This legislative action was based on the belief that knowledge of one's own state, history and government is fundamental to informed and effective participation in state and local affairs.
>
> In October 1988 the state board directed the Department to work with the Alaska Council for the Social Studies on how to implement this resolution. This group developed a recommendation which was translated into regulatory language.
>
> During the Spring of 1990, proposed amendments to 4 AAC 05.080 (d) were circulated for public review. These amendments would have required that districts develop and implement a K-12 Alaska Studies scope and sequence which contained at least the learning objectives included in the Department's Alaska Studies Scope and Sequence.
>
> Comments were received from nine school districts and persons representing three groups. The majority of the respondents objected to the mandate of specific course content. They viewed this requirement as a violation of local control and local appropriateness and measurability of some of the objectives contained in the proposed Department's scope and sequence.
>
> After reviewing and considering public comment on the subject, the Department recommended that the Board reword the proposed amendment to regulation 4 AAC 05.080 (d)(3) to require that district elementary and secondary curriculum contain, at minimum, the learning objectives in the Department of Education Alaska Studies Learning Objectives.

> The Board chose not to take action on the proposed regulation. The Board directed Department staff to reword an Outcome which would address Alaska Studies, within the context of the Outcome language.[32]

In November, 1990, the state board considered several alternatives to the problem and agreed to the following notion for inclusion in board regulations:

> Require that each district develop performance indicators in Alaska Studies which identify what all students should achieve. This would require districts to identify the information they want students to know about Alaska at both elementary and secondary levels. Documentation of the performance of students would be required of the school district.

During the time these developments were taking place at the board level, the Department's Office of Basic Education and Instructional Improvement in the Division of Education Program Support prepared a highly commendable Alaska studies program for all grades. Although the Committee believes this program should be a required feature of all Alaska schools, its use remains an option at the local level.

Even though the Committee endorses the principle of delegating matters of curriculum to the state board and local districts in general, the study of Alaska is an exception. As the population of Alaska grows and issues concerned with development and utilization of resources become more polarized, the need for all Alaskans to be well informed about Alaska's history, systems of government, geography and natural resources, and rich multiculturally diverse population becomes more critical. Therefore, it is recommended:

that the legislature, by statute, require that the scope and sequence schedule developed by the state Department of Education in its Alaska studies program be incorporated into the curriculum of each school district of the state.

RESEARCH, EVALUATION, AND DISSEMINATION

It is generally agreed that the ultimate reason for educational research is to foster improved school performance. As envisioned by Willis D. Hawley of Peabody College, Vanderbilt University,

> The process of improvement starts with the identification of possible alternatives for improving education-related policies and practices and careful research to discover the relative effectiveness and efficiency of these alternatives.
>
> Research should lead to the specification of models ... that can be implemented in a range of settings and the testing of the effectiveness and costs of the new models. This step is essential because virtually all educational strategies are importantly influenced by conditions that often have considerable variation. Understanding how these differences affect the efficacy of the strategy and building such understanding into models for improvement is essential in order to achieve effective changes in management procedures, teaching, curriculum, and other factors that influence student learning.
>
> Once effective practices and policies are identified, and the conditions that influence their relative effectiveness in different settings are specified, this information needs to be disseminated in a variety of forms and formats.[31]

As the Committee collected background material for this report, the need to better understand processes of schooling in Alaska became clear. For instance, why do some pupils succeed

where others do not, why do some programs of instruction work well but others do not, and how can information about successful programs be disseminated more effectively? The approach to a sound research program has been suggested by Hawley fits the need to answer these and similar questions. However, although each branch of the University of Alaska and Alaska Pacific University have declared purposes of furthering knowledge through organized research in education, it cannot be said that their current capabilities are sufficient to achieve this purpose. What little research that is done is initiated only by inspired individual investigators. The issue is not whether there is a need for educational research; the issue is whether or not there is the capability and commitment at Alaska's research institutions to carry it out.

Pointing out that the adequacy of educational research capability in Alaska is at issue is not meant to imply that this shortcoming is being ignored. Efforts to develop a coordinated, sustained institutional educational research presence at the University of Alaska Fairbanks have been underway for some time. As long ago as 1981 a group of University faculty members at Fairbanks approached the legislature to establish an "Alaska Educational Research Foundation" as an independent, quasi-public agency designed to receive, administer, and dispense funds for the purpose of stimulating and supporting research and evaluation activities that address issues of educational significance in the state. And as recently as 1988, a position paper proposing a similar plan was put forth during hearings held by the Senate's Special Committee on School Performance. While the legislature did not take direct action along these lines, the University did by including funds for the effort in its Fairbanks campus budget. Established in the office of the Chancellor of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, an educational research "agency" is now being activated.

The University's new initiative (for sustained educational research) appears promising; there is a need for long-range, ongoing studies that will provide the state with background materials and knowledge of options that are necessary to meet goals of education. Policymakers in state agencies and school districts will continue to require information that will better enable them to relate current efforts at school improvement to principles of equity and to enable them to judge better the validity of the requirements and claims of those who are attempting to reform public education. Although the legislature cannot mandate or guarantee useful educational research, it can endorse promising research initiatives and provide the financial means required for them to succeed--once the University demonstrates its commitment and ability to carry them out. *Therefore* the Joint Committee recommends:

> *that the legislature support the University's "Alaska School Research Fund" as it has the potenial to enable Alaska's research capability to become sufficient to meet the state's educational research needs. Furthermore, it recommends pursuing research on subjects suggested in this report and others that may be suggested, especially those that seek the means to ameliorate causes of inadequate school performance.*

The findings and recommendations contained in this report conclude the Committee's work as specified in its enabling legislation. In the following chapter the Committee's conclusions are summarized and its recommendations reviewed.

CHAPTER THREE
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

When established by the Sixteenth Legislature, the Joint Committee on School Performance was charged with identifying causes of inadequate school performance and recommending ways to overcome them. It has not been the purpose of the Committee to seek an indictment of school personnel or schools in general; in some locations exceptionally effective school programs and teachers are to be found. It is undeniable, however, that in many instances school performance is far from what it eventually must be. Whether due to problems in society as a whole or with Alaska's system of public education, there are conspicuous and critical failings in elementary and secondary education in Alaska. Although the legislature has wisely delegated much of its policy-making authority to school districts, the legislature remains ultimately responsible for failings in the system because of its constitutional mandate to maintain public schools in Alaska. In this role the legislature must seek to alleviate widespread shortcomings.

NEEDS IDENTIFIED

Drawing on material in this and the Committee's first report, the Committee has concluded that shortcomings in school performance may be attributed to the following deficiencies, all of which require immediate attention:

1. The need for stricter school district accountability through more closely monitored school operations by the legislature.

2. The need to encourage greater local participation in school affairs at the community or building level.

3. The need to insist on better coordinated health, social service, and educational agencies as a means to remove barriers to learning among disadvantaged youth.

4. The need to strengthen readiness to learn among pre-school children.

5. The need to raise and distribute funds for school districts more equitably among all regions and political subdivisions of the state.

6. The need to achieve balanced equality of opportunity among all students.

7. The need to redraw some school district boundaries in a way that will make districts more operationally efficient, more cost effective, and more receptive to constituent needs.

8. The need to strengthen professional development in the teaching profession.

9. The need for all students to be better informed about the political and natural history of Alaska, the cultural heritage of all its people, and its economic potential.

10. The need to better understand processes of schooling in Alaska, such as why some pupils succeed where others do not, why some programs of instruction work well while others do not, and how information about successful programs can be disseminated more effectively.

It is not just coincidental that some of the observations made by the Joint Committee in arriving at these needs correspond to those of similarly constituted groups in other states. Many states, either through their legislatures or governors' offices, have undertaken school performance improvement or school system restructuring programs in recent years. The movement for improved school performance is national in scope; many problems relating to school performance identified elsewhere are present in Alaska. Others, some of the most severe, are uniquely Alaskan and are in part the causes of the incongruous gap in performance between poorly performing students, many of whom are in isolated rural villages, and adequately performing students.

RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEWED

In response to the Joint Committee's findings and as the means that will enable the legislature to eliminate or reduce some of the deficiencies the Committee has identified, several recommendations in this and the Committee's first report have been made. To deal with other needs, the Committee has raised several questions about the condition of Alaska's system of public schools that first must be answered before additional recommendations can be made. In either case, the legislature needs to advocate and guarantee changes that will lead to new directives in school performance. The Joint Committee has recommended changes that it believes are preconditions to most improvements in school performance

School District Accountability [Pages 8 - 12]

The need for stricter school district accountability was well established by the Alaska Senate through the work of its Special Committee on School Performance in 1988 and the Joint Committee

on School Performance in 1989 and 1990. Acting on a recommendation of the Joint Committee, the legislature passed HB 469 in 1990 (now codified as Chapter 173) establishing the purposes, expected outcomes, and goals of schooling. Furthermore, Chapter 173 requires school districts to be held accountable for the authority delegated to them by requiring an annual "report card" on school performance to the public and the legislature. The state Department of Education is currently developing procedures, in cooperation with school districts, the public, and the education profession in general, that will enable the process to be carried out promptly and uniformly. (As a means to underscore the significance of this legislation, Bob Arnold former staff director of the Senate's Special Committee on School Performance, has summarized in essay form his reflections on the legislature's declared purposes of schooling since enactment of Chapter 173. His essay is attached as Appendix H.)

Incentive Grants and Local Participation

[Pages 13 - 16]

The need to encourage greater local participation in school improvement was addressed in HB 469 with passage of a clause in the bill that established the Fund for the Improvement of School Performance, but failed to appropriate funds to activate the program. The governing body of a school district, district advisory board or nonprofit community organization, or a teacher or principal employed by a school in the state, may apply for a grant to improve school performance by submitting an application to the commissioner of education. Without an appropriation creation of the fund serves no purpose. Therefore, the Committee recommends

that no less than $3,000,000 be appropriated annually to the Fund for the Improvement of School Performance over the next five years.

Health and Family Services Programs

[Pages 16-17]

The Committee recognized that not all causes of inadequate school performance can be attributed to problems in the school system. Thus, the Committee has identified the need for better coordinated health and family-related service programs, for the complexity of the need for change involves social, health, and poverty-related problems. To address these in a coordinated way, the legislature enacted HCR 46 in response to a recommendation in the Committee's first report. That resolution called on the executive branch of government to create a committee of cognizant department heads to develop a plan that will enable their departments to better serve the needs of disadvantaged and "at risk" students through coordinated deployment of resources. The governor is presently examining ways this resolution can be implemented.

To underscore the sense of importance the Committee gives to this subject, it recommends:

that a resolution calling for better coordinated services among the departments of health and social services, labor, community and regional affairs, and education, similar to the resolution calling for this effort passed by the 16th Legislature, be enacted by the 17th Legislature.

Early Childhood and Parneting Education

[Pages 17-21]

The need for enhanced early childhood education is consistent with testimony from every corner of the state, urban and rural. Among fundamental causes that deny children the means or motivation necessary to succeed at schooling are inadequate or insufficient early childhood and parenting education. In recognition of this reality the legislature has increased appropriations for early childhood education as has the federal government. There remain, however, many unanswered questions on the nature of early childhood education and how programs should be delivered, answers to which will determine the eventual make-up of Alaska's early childhood programs.

Therefore, as was stated in its first report the Committee recommends:

> that the legislature, by resolution, establish a Committee to address the issues and questions on early childhood education that pertain to the education of Alaska's young children, with particular attention given to those children with environmental handicaps. Included among the Committee's responsibility shall be the development of a plan for a statewide program of early childhood education and preparation of a report on its findings with recommendations to the legislature no later than May, 1992.

School Finance and Governance [Pages 29-84]

Of all the needs identified by the Joint Committee, the need for a redesigned system of school governance and finance is the most complex. Because this subject addresses so many important

problem areas (the need for tax liability equity among districts, equitable distribution of state funds for school purposes, and equitable decision making authority among all Alaska communities), meeting it may hold the greatest promise of all the Committee's recommendations. The Committee recommends:

> *that the legislature, in recognition of the urgency of the need for improved school performance, initiate a thorough investigation of the school finance and governance systems of Alaska public education. It is further recommended that this work be conducted as a legislative "in-house study" (utilizing the resources of the Department of Education when required) and that it be carried out under the auspices of a newly created joint committee on school performance (as recommended in Chapter Three). The study shall include answers to the questions posed in the body of this report (pages 46-47 and 61-64) and propose a system of governance and a financial foundation formula in agreement with the findings. The committee shall report its findings and make its proposals no later than January 1993.*

Professional Development of School Personnel

[Pages 84 - 104]

Much of the education reform movement during the past decade has focused on improving the quality of teacher performance through improved professional development. Although it is recognized that the aggregate of Alaska's current teaching force is among the best trained and competent in the nation, this position is at risk. Teacher shortages, primarily in rural schools where recently there has been an annual teacher turnover rate of 30%, have made it necessary to recruit teachers who do not have the background necessary to succeed under the demanding

conditions found in many Alaska schools. The means to develop, recruit, and retain an adequate teacher force, both in numbers and ability, need to be expanded and enhanced. Therefore, in the matter of teacher education and training, it is recommended:

1. that a BA or BS degree in a subject matter discipline be a prerequisite for admission to a professional teacher education program at all campuses of the University of Alaska.

2. that teacher training programs that prepare new teachers and upgrade in-service teachers for assignment in village schools be standard offerings of the University of Alaska system and routinely available as a means to qualify candidates for teacher certificate endorsements appropriate to recommendation number 3 under certification below (pertaining to village teaching).

3. that the University of Alaska prepare detailed estimates of the funding that will be required to carry out the prior two recommendations, to be made available to the legislature no later than January 15, 1992.

In the matter of teacher certification, it is recommended:

1. that legislation be enacted relating to requirements for limited teacher certificates for the purpose of providing teachers in certain limited fields where baccalaureate degree training is not sufficiently available, so long as the person demonstrates both subject matter expertise and teaching competency.

2. that the legislature, by resolution, instruct the state board of education to investigate the feasibility and desirability of setting into place alternative certification routes for candidates entering teaching from other fields not covered in recommendation number 1 under this heading.

3. that the legislature, by resolution, urge the state board of education to adopt a tiered system of certification that distinguishes between competencies necessary to teach in rural, multicultural communities (Alaska villages) and traditional, urban teaching assignments.

In the matter of tenure, it is recommended:

that the existing tenure law be changed. Sec. 14.20.150 (2) presently requires teachers to be "employed as a teacher in the same district continuously for <u>two</u> full school years and is reemployed for the school year immediately following the two full years." The Committee proposes the following alteration: "employed as a teacher in the same district continuously for five full school years and is reemployed for the school year immediately following the <u>five</u> full years."

Program Definition and Curricula

[Pages 104 - 108]

Strengthened curricula and innovative programs of instruction can be among the most promising components of the school improvement movement. Historically it has been the practice of the Alaska legislature to defer decisions affecting curricula and programs of instruction to others. Nevertheless, and although the

Committee subscribes to the principle of delegating matters of curriculum to the state board and local districts, because a critical need is not being met. Alaska studies is an exception to this doctrine. There is a critical need for all Alaskans to be well informed about Alaska's history, system of government, geography and natural resources, and the richness of its multiculturally diverse population.

Therefore, it is recommended:

> that the legislature, by statute, require that the scope and sequence schedule developed by the state Department of Education in its Alaska studies program be incorporated into the curriculum of each school district of the state.

Research, Evaluation, and Dissemination

[Pages 109 - 112]

As the Committee collected background material for this report, the need to better understand processes of schooling in Alaska became clear. There is a need for long-range, ongoing studies that will provide the state with background materials and knowledge of options that are necessary to meet goals of education. What little research is carried out by Alaska institutions is usually initiated only by inspired individual investigators. Current capabilities of Alaska institutions of higher education and the Department of Education to fulfill Alaska's educational research needs are being questioned. The issue is not whether there is a need for educational research; the issue is whether there is the capability and commitment at Alaska's research institutions to carry it out.

Efforts at the University of Alaska to develop a coordinated, sustained, institutional educational research presence with its recently established Alaska Schools Research Fund have created the potential to meet most research needs

that this report speaks to as well as many others.

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

> *that the legislature support the University's "Alaska School Research Fund" as it has the potential to enable Alaska's research capability to become sufficient to meet the state's educational research needs. Furthermore, it recommends pursuing research on subjects suggested in this report and others that may be suggested, especially those that seek the means to ameliorate causes of inadequate school performance.*

This summary leads to the Joint Committee's final recommendation. There is need for the legislature to continue to give extraordinary attention to school performance. Arguments advanced in favor of creating the Joint Committee two years ago remain valid. Some of the Committee's recommendations already acted upon require continuing legislative oversight. And as measures to meet needs identified in this report are developed, they should be monitored by the legislature to guarantee that they are carried out correctly and promptly. In particular, the study of the state's school finance and governance system recommended by the Committee in Chapter Two should be accomplished under the auspices of the legislature. Therefore the Committee recommends:

that the 17th Alaska Legislature establish a House-Senate Joint Committee on School Improvement. The Committee shall continue the work of the Joint Committee on School Performance, make additional recommendations as conditions warrant, and oversee all of the legislature's initiatives in school improvement.

CONCLUSION

Although there have been efforts at school reform over the past several years that failed because they were ill founded or inadequately carried out, it would be a mistake to dismiss current arguments for reform as lacking in substance or to doubt that there is genuine need. Two compelling reasons support this statement and the presumption that there is need to act on the Committee's recommendations definitively and promptly. First, the number of students who drop out of school or finish school unable to fill out a job application form let alone qualify for any kind of employment grows increasingly higher each year. As many as one out of every three students presently enrolled is experiencing social, economic, or academic distress. Complicating these conditions is the reality that these students are not uniformly distributed among the state's fifty-four school districts. There are concentrations of students (often in small, remote villages) where 60% to 70% of the school-age population benefits little from Alaska's education system. These children do not progress toward but rather retreat from requirements of contemporary society. Because they are scattered over such a large geographic area, the critical nature of their deficiencies is not apparent. Consequently, they attract far less public awareness and concern than is usually necessary to activate calls for remedial measures. Nevertheless, these children are there, their need is great, and their numbers are growing.

Second, the level of education necessary to succeed in Alaska's (and the nation's) increasingly technological and educationally demanding society is much higher than ever before. There are more youth falling out of the system who are unable to cope academically or socially at any level than ever before, while at the same time the need to complete a solid basic education as a pre-condition merely to survive economically steadily increases. In the first report of the Joint Committee, quoting Lisbeth Shore from her book, *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*, the point was made that "In today's world, a youngster who leaves school unable to read, write, and do simple arithmetic faces a bleak future. When a substantial proportion of boys and girls leave school uneducated, the rest of us face a bleak future."

Guided by the assumption that all children and youth are able to learn and that the state as well as individual students will profit from their learning, the Committee is convinced that Alaska need not face a bleak future -- *if education is given the priority it requires.* It follows, therefore, that the financial and intellectual resources of the state must be made equally available to all children. The real proof of the legislature's success in advocating and guaranteeing improved school performance will be seen when all students achieve levels of performance commensurate with their abilities regardless of their ethnicity, their gender, their economic circumstance, or their place of residence.

I HAVE LIVED IN THIS VILLAGE ALL MY LIFE AND NEVER WENT TO SCHOOL. I SPEAK ONLY MY NATIVE LANGUAGE. WHY IS IT THAT THE KIDS WHO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL DO NOT KNOW ANY MORE THAN I DO?

TUNUNUK VILLAGE ELDER
SEPTEMBER, 1989

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: THE ROLE OF THE LEGISLATURE, JANUARY, 1990 – THE FIRST REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE
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APPENDIX B

STATE OUTCOMES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION
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APPENDIX C

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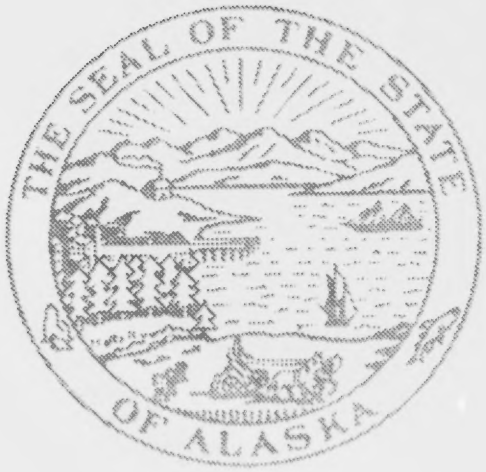
Excellence in School Performance: The Role of the Legislature



A Report of the Joint Committee on School Performance

Sixteenth Alaska Legislature

January 1990

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"If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."

Thomas Jefferson, 1816

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INTRODUCTION

The Joint Committee on School Performance was established on the grounds that there is widespread public concern for the condition of school performance in Alaska. As one means for the legislature to fulfill its responsibility to maintain a system of public schools, the Committee was instructed to identify those subjects for priority legislative attention that might enable school performance to be improved. To accomplish this task it first was necessary to find out what really is in need of betterment. The Committee has been going about this job by holding public hearings, attending professional education association meetings, confering with school and university personnel, meeting with the state board of education, reviewing the literature and holding internal work sessions. Much of what we have learned about schooling is commendable, but we have also determined that all districts need to rethink some of their approaches to school improvement.

The Committee has attempted to avoid the shortcomings of previous school reform movements, especially those where immediate results were expected. Too often hastily and inadequately planned improvement efforts have been worse than none at all. The president of the National School Boards Association has cautioned that it will take years to enable schools to attain a level of performance equal to the task of preparing youth for the 21st Century, if this goal is to be accomplished at all. The process of providing the best possible school system for Alaska will require time, sound methodology and patience.

With these needs in mind, three basic beliefs have guided the Committee during its deliberations and the preparation of this report:

1) The amount and kinds of mandated policy that school districts receive from the legislature should be kept to a minimum, reserving to the State Board of Education and local boards the greater part of regulatory authority.

2) Regardless of the extent to which responsibilities are delegated, the legislature is constitutionally obligated to define by law fundamental, statewide purposes of education **and prescribe the means by which school districts are to be held accountable for meeting those purposes**.

3) The legislature is bound to provide the means, financial or otherwise, to nurture the freedom to learn among **all** the children of the state **and to seek improved ways to organize, govern, fund, and oversee schooling in Alaska**.

The Committee specified two criteria for selecting subjects for priority legislative attention:

1) Subjects selected should relate to policy considerations.

2) Subjects should be of such a level of importance that they deal with root causes of schooling problems.

Subjects identified that meet these criteria include:

1. Mandated state goals for education and school district accountability, including mandated measures of achievement.

2. Improved and coordinated health and family service programs as they relate to school programs.

3. State-supported and coordinated early childhood education and parenting education.

4. Improved professional competency for teachers and school administrators by addressing such topics as training, certification, professional incentives and tenure reform.

5. A review of Alaska's systems of school governance and administration as they relate to school performance.

6. Expanded and enhanced programs of Alaska studies, including Alaska history, government, geography, cultures, and economics.

7. Improved distance education and educational television, especially by satellite.

8. Improved and expanded education research, evaluation, and dissemination of findings.

It may be argued which of these subjects merit the highest priority, but we believe they all must be addressed as soon as time and funds permit.

As recommendations for legislative attention derived from this report are considered, we believe it is important to keep in mind that although Alaska has had good reason over the years to take pride in its schools, there are now students who critically need fresh approaches to schooling and new and unprecedented demands on schools are being made at an ever increasing rate. Schools in the past, no matter how good, would not have been sufficient to meet today's need for a well-educated public nor would they have been able to cope with the extent of social dysfunction now found in many locales throughout the state. The legislature is obliged to lead the way to even better schools and thereby to a better educated populace.

CHAPTER 1

ORIGIN AND PURPOSES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

Reasons for Establishing the Joint Committee

Education is, in the minds of many, the single most important function of government. At all levels of government, from President Bush's Summit Meeting of forty-nine state governors, held in October, 1989, to advisory school boards in the smallest and most remote of Alaska's rural villages, education is seen as the one irreplaceable prerequisite to a satisfying individual life and the most essential ingredient of a healthy society. Alaskans have long recognized this necessity; to assure educational opportunity for all, Alaska lags behind only five of the nation's ten richest states in expenditure per pupil from state and local revenues. This status, although it represents a decline from previous years, places Alaska's per pupil expenditure rate almost 20 percent more than the national average.[1]

Reflecting this level of support are many schools in Alaska that employ exemplary programs and show an excellent level of school performance among their students. Descriptions of programs that work and students that score high on achievement tests can be identified in several locations. These could serve as models for other districts and students, especially if the reasons for their success were better known. Nevertheless, as the Senate Special Report on School Performance of the Fifteenth Legislature has so thoroughly documented, **some of the most fundamental aspects of Alaska's systems and programs of education are not meeting the**

educational needs of a large number of children.

Thus, all parties concerned with the current school performance improvement movement need to be aware of the wide variety of schooling conditions and results of schooling efforts in Alaska, favorable and unfavorable, and the need to take these variables into consideration as recommendations and legislation are developed.

In recognition of the unmet critical needs of some aspects of education in Alaska, and acting on a recommendation in the Senate Report on School Performance, the Sixteenth Alaska Legislature established the Joint Senate-House Committee on School Performance in May, 1989. Included in the enabling legislation that established the Committee was a directive to identify school performance subjects for priority legislative attention. It was in response to that directive that the Joint Committee turned its attention in August, 1989.

The formal goal of the Joint Committee is logical and simple: improved levels of public education among all pupils of the state, **while recognizing that there are groups of students whom schools persistently have not served well**. However, the means to reach this goal are far from simple. Indeed, the Joint Committee believes that adequate solutions to the myriad problems of education can be found only by addressing the complexities of the most basic relationships that exist among the numerous and varied factors that bear on public education. This, the Joint Committee contends, can be achieved only by addressing the root causes of education problems. The report that follows is a step in this direction.

A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future, A Nation at Risk, A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century, and *Crossroads in American Education* are only a few of several works at the national level that speak to the decline in effectiveness of public education in America as a whole as well as in Alaska and convey a sense of urgency. For example, as the National Commission on Excellence in Education indicated,

> The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur—others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments... We have in effect, been committing an act of unthinking unilateral disarmament.[2]

At the state level, the recent report of the Senate Special Committee on School Performance, *Helping Schools Succeed at Helping All Children Learn*, The Department of Education's report, *Basic Skills Performance of Alaska's Students*, the report of the Governor's Interim Commission on Children and Youth, and the Alaska Federation of Natives' *Report on the Status of Alaska Natives: A Call for Action*, all forcefully attest to the deplorable inadequacy of schooling among many segments of Alaska's population, as does testimony given at several hearings recently held throughout the state. Although these papers and hearings shed much light on the nature of the problems, the Committee will remain sensitive to additional information it may encounter in the future. **The primary work of the committee, however, has been and will continue to be to move the discussion from that of deficiencies and fault finding to one of problem solving and subsequent action.**

Role of the Legislature in School Performance Issues

Compounding the difficulty of finding the means to resolve schooling problems in Alaska is the large number of groups with statutory responsibilities or vested interests in the enterprise. The State Board of Education, the State Department of Education, the State Department of R EGIONAL and Community Affairs, and municipal and REAA school boards all have delegated authority over certain aspects of schooling. The Association of Alaska School Boards (recognized in statute), the Alaska Council of School Administrators, and NEA-Alaska have vested interests in education. Many other groups, such as the Parent Teachers Association, speak as protagonists for certain aspects of schooling and seek to influence policy at the state and local level. (There are approximately 95 professional education associations or special interest groups currently recognized in Alaska, all of which are involved in schooling.) Among some school districts there appears to be confusion as to the amount and type of authority that may be assumed and in some cases the nature of the relationship between school districts and the legislature may have been misunderstood, if not actually abused. A need exists, therefore, to clarify the role of the legislature and its relationship to other groups with responsibilities for schooling before describing the subjects identified by the Joint Committee for priority legislation.

There is no question where the ultimate responsibility for public education resides. The legislature, deriving its authority from the people through the Constitution, has a clear mandate:

> "The Legislature shall by general law establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the state...."(Constitution of Alaska, Article VII, Sec. 1)

The court has affirmed that this section guarantees all children of Alaska a right to public education and that education is a matter of statewide concern.

> The constitutional mandate of this section for pervasive state authority in the field of education could not be more clear. First the language is mandatory, not permissive. Second, this section not only requires that the legislature "establish" a school system but also gives to that body the continuing obligation to "maintain" the system. Finally, the provision is unqualified; no other unit of government shares responsibility or authority (Macauley v. Hildebrand, Sup. Ct.Op. No. 741, 1971).

The constitutional provision for education found in Alaska differs in one major respect from many other states in that it does not require uniformity within the school system.

Other states typically have constitutions that contain phrases such as "shall provide for the establishment and maintenance of a thorough and uniform system of free public schools"; or "provide for a uniform system of common schools"; or "establish and maintain a general, uniform and thorough system of public, free common schools." In Alaska the court has concluded that the term uniform, or its equivalent, was not made a part of the Alaska Constitution because of the adverse effects such a system could have on Alaska's multicultural population. (However, Alaska would still be under the federal mandate for equal protection if resources for education were to be unfairly distributed.)

The court has also found that the broad mandate to the legislature found in the Constitution is not diminished by delegating certain educational functions to local boards:

> That the legislature has seen fit to delegate certain educational functions to local boards in order that Alaska schools might be adapted to meet the varying conditions of different localities does not diminish constitutionally mandated state control over education.... (Macauley v. Hildebrand, supra)

Thus, it is a well-established principle that education is a state legislative function and that the legislature has the unrestricted right to prescribe how the education system shall be constituted. By enacting legislation creating school districts and regional education attendance areas, it follows that local school districts are state agencies that operate at the local level. Their function is the execution of state policy. Accordingly, school districts can exercise only those powers implied or expressly granted by statute, and their nature and composition may be changed by the legislature as it sees fit.

However, as a means of fulfilling their basic state responsibility for education, the legislature relies on the long- standing tradition of "local control" in American education. By creating local districts and REAAs, legislators have recognized the impracticalities of the legislature actually administering the laws that regulate schools. The daily processes of public education, comprised of so many elements, and the need to accommodate so many variables among dissimilar regions of Alaska requires a state system that enables schools to be administered at the local level. This concept notwithstanding, historically it can be shown that this approach to governance has required adjustments from time to time.

This view is reinforced by a persuasive statement by Terrel Bell, former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, in which he said:

> Legislative leaders should assign to governing boards the responsibility for attaining the levels of educational performance commensurate with the ideals and aspirations of the State. Legislative assignment of responsibility should, however, be accompanied by mandates that results be measured and reported back to those who must stand before the electorate.[3]

On the one hand, Bell asserts that "if we are to move....to newer and higher levels of excellence in education, it must be through effective leadership action by our State legislatures...." But he also recognizes the role of local boards and has urged "legislative leaders to draft legislation that encourages school boards to govern the schools more aggressively...Many changes must come by board and administrative action in close cooperation with teachers and parents. We do not need, for example, curriculum development on the floor of the House and the Senate."[4]

Thus, defining the optimal balance in governance between the local community on the one hand and the state level on the other is a critical role of the legislature in general and the Joint Committee in particular. This view should not exclude the role of the State Board of Education as a partner with the legislature at the state level. Historically that role has varied and may need to be better defined. Therefore, a section of the Joint Committee's second report will address the problem of differentiating the type and level of responsibility of all official groups charged with providing for the education of the children of the state.

Recent Legislative Interest in Improved School Performance

The Senate of the Fifteenth Alaska Legislature initiated the current thrust of the legislature into the school improvement movement with publication of its extensive report on schooling in Alaska, *Helping Schools Succeed at Helping All Children Learn*. Developed by the Senate Special Committee on School Performance, chaired by Senator William L. Hensley, the report describes school reform efforts in America and Alaska during the past decade. Notable among the findings of this committee is the wide variety of issues that need to be addressed by the legislature. A summary of the Senate Committee's report and its recommendations appears as part of the appendix to this report; where appropriate, reference to that report is made throughout this paper.

In states other than Alaska during the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in the level of legislative activity promulgating new laws affecting schooling. In the view of some, increased control of education by legislatures, especially at the programmatic level, has been excessive. Others view the trend as overdue and necessary if true reform is to take place. Generally, new legislation is found in one or more of four categories: (1) training, certification, and professional incentives for teachers; (2) academic experiences of students, including curriculum and graduation requirements and special minority programs; (3) financing; and (4) organization and structure.[5]

By the mid 1980s most states had joined the process of enacting sweeping reform laws. Colorado had enacted 114 new education laws, many of them requiring new sets of regulations, and Arkansas recently enacted 122 education related statutes. In New Mexico,

as examples of the areas of schooling that have come under recent legislative efforts, new laws affect the minimum length of school days, school staffing patterns, class loads, and the minimum amount of instructional time to be provided in various subject content areas. Moreover, there have been increases in the graduation requirements for all high school students, with basic subjects prescribed and course hours in them increased.

In Texas, new laws prohibit social promotions from one grade to the next, establish the number of minutes that must be spent on each content area during each school day, and require that placement, promotion, and retention of students be based on mastery of essential elements of the curriculum. Examples from New Mexico and Texas are not atypical of many other states where "reforms" have been mandated through statute rather than through state boards of education or local policy-making bodies.[6] Table No.1 summarizes the types of reform legislation and the number of states that have recently enacted laws in each category. It should be noted, however, that this material has been included in this report as information and is not necessarily an endorsement by the Committee for any one approach or for any kind or amount of legislative action taken elsewhere to address shortcomings in education. Issues affecting school performance in Alaska are treated in the next part of this report on a topic by topic basis in the context of the Alaskan environment and society.

Alaska may have been slow to join the nationwide movement (or "craze" as some might contend) for school improvement. But from testimony given during the numerous hearings held by the Senate Committee on School Performance, from material gathered by the Joint Committee at its hearings and meetings, and from the general tone of statements given at several other recent meetings addressing problems of school performance, such as the Forum on Youth at Risk sponsored by AFN and DOE, the Alaska public now appears to agree with those who advocate the need for school reforms. And the public appears ready to spend more for schools, if that is what it will take to improve education in Alaska. At the same time the public is apprehensive about investing more in Alaska's educational system as it is now constituted. The need to gain public confidence that school performance can be improved is at hand.

TABLE 1

Recent Initiatives Reported by States and the District of Columbia

	Under Consideration or Proposed	Enacted or Approved	Total
Increased high school graduation requirements	6	41[a]	47[a]
Higher college admissions standards	11	22	33
New or revised student evaluation/testing	7	37[a]	44[a]
Changes in adoption procedures	9	13	22
Special academic recognition programs	5	25	30
Increased instructional time[b]	14	20[a]	34[a]
Longer school day[b]	11	11[a]	22[a]
Longer school year[b]	12	8[a]	20[a]
State-supported specialized schools	6	14[a]	20[a]
State-supported academic enrichment programs	8	34[a]	42[a]
Improved school discipline policies	8	19	27
State-mandated placement/promotion policies	4	15[a]	19[a]
State academic requirements for extra-curricular/athletic participation	8	13	21
Raised teacher preparation/certification standards	14	35	49
Performance-based teacher incentives	15	22[a]	37[a]
Efforts to address teacher shortages	11[a]	26	37[a]
State-sponsored professional development programs for teachers	14	30[a]	44[a]
State-sponsored professional development programs for administrators	12	30[a]	42[a]

a—Includes the District of Columbia

b—Twenty-seven states have enacted or approved one or more of these three ways to increase instructional time.

c—Of the twenty-two, fourteen (including the District of Columbia) have enacted/approved performance-based incentive plans for implementation or pilot testing. Eight states have a legislative or state board mandate to develop an incentive program.

Source: U.S. Department of Education

Implementation of new ideas for improved school performance may be more difficult than paying for them. In Alaska, where a multitude of conditions exist among a highly diverse, multicultural society, the constitutional mandate to provide for "all the children of the state" may be the legislature's most formidable challenge. But if the will is there, the likelihood that this mandate can be realized is favorable. Today, at all levels, the state has more skilled and competent personnel than ever. In the sections that follow subjects deemed by the committee to be essential to improved school performance are analyzed and priority legislation recommended.

CHAPTER 2

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SUBJECTS IDENTIFIED AND ANALYZED, WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The unacceptable level of school performance found in far too many Alaskan schools is the Joint Committee's greatest concern. But as mentioned earlier in this report, the Committee has not undertaken to criticize education or to find fault with any one particular aspect of current schooling practices. There is already a large volume of material attesting to the nature and scope of the problems to which the legislature needs to turn its attention, much of which may be found in the Senate report of last year and in the material collected for the appendix to this report. What the Joint Committee has done is to look for ways that schooling may be improved, especially among that portion of the Alaska population that shows the greatest likelihood of being unable to succeed after it leaves school. However, a brief description of the problem, the status of educational achievement as it is today, is one way to establish why prompt implementation of the Joint Committee's recommendations is important.

Measuring school achievement with standardized test in recent years at the elementary and junior high school level showed Alaskan students as a group performing slightly above the national average. If it may be assumed that the national average is an adequate standard upon which to base the educational level of Alaskans, an assumption some would question, there may be some

satisfaction in these findings. However, on the high school level in non-urban areas not even the national average was reached statewide in the content areas of problem solving and reading. For example, in 1987 fifty-five percent of non-urban high school students scored below the national level in reading.

These levels of achievement, although less than satisfactory, would not be too disturbing in the view of some were it not for three critical factors.

1. **Over the past several years there has been a steady statewide decline in all school achievement**, with 1989's decline the highest yet, although this may be partially explained because of the use of a new test.

2. **The range of achievement levels on standardized tests between districts is extreme—in 1989 it extended from a low at the 3rd percentile in some content areas in one district to a high of the 75th percentile in another**. Data arrived at from the state's 1989 testing program reveals that twenty of Alaska's 54 school districts had at least one average score in the areas of reading, mathematics, or language arts below the 22nd percentile in grades 4, 6, or 8. The school population in those districts is 12,745 students or slightly more than 12 percent of Alaska's entire student population. Test results in many other school districts, most of which are found in rural areas where poverty is common and English language development is inadequate, are not much higher. (Data supplied by the State Department of Education from a forthcoming report on the 1989 statewide testing program.)

3. **School dropout rates in recent years in both urban and rural districts continues to increase**; the percentage of youth who do not complete a normal twelve year school program grows greater each year and is now as high as 60 percent to 70 percent in some districts.

ACT (American College Testing Service) scores are another measure of school performance. The University of Alaska reports that over the past twenty years there has been a steady decline in these scores nationally and in Alaska. **Moreover, in Alaska, the RATE OF DECLINE has been at an even higher rate than the nation as a whole, and the rate of decline is still higher when**

compared with the western states as a unit. But like achievement tests in K-12 schools, averages do not reveal the extent of the problem. Patrick O'Rourke, Chancellor of UAF, recently reported the following:

> Unfortunately, when you look at the [ACT] data by racial and ethnic group, major disparities again present themselves. Caucasian Alaskans had an average composite score of 20.7, almost two points above the national average of 18.8, American Indian groups had an average score of 14.9 while Alaskan Natives had an average score of 12.2. One sees an even greater disparity within the state of Alaska, as it pertains to the largest minority population, than seen across the rest of the United States.[8]

And as a further indicator of the declining state of school performance (an indicator not derived from standardized tests), "27 percent of enrolling college freshman [at the University of Alaska] require some form of developmental English and 42 percent of these same enrolling college freshmen require some form of developmental mathematics in order to have the opportunity for success in a university program".[9]

Arguably, nationally normed achievement tests or the ACT may be inadequate or unfair measures of school performance among Alaska's multicultural population. (The issue of testing is discussed in detail below.) But even if standardized tests are disregarded, other indicators of inadequate or inappropriate schooling practices (such as social dysfunction among large numbers of Alaska youth, high levels of substance abuse, and unemployability of many school dropouts and graduates alike) speak to the need for immediate and substantial schooling reform initiatives by the legislature.

Subjects selected for priority legislative attention in the introduction of this report have been repeatedly identified throughout the state as having the potential to improve the way schools help children learn. Promptly acted on, the statewide decline in school performance and low showing now obvious in so many locations can be reversed. But before there can be recommendations for reform advanced (and ultimately improved schooling), the points at issue in each subject need to be delineated and the various arguments for and against positions taken on them understood. The order in which these subjects are presented represent their priority ranking as perceived by the Committee. But each topic is part of a

larger whole and eventually all, including those to be covered in the second report of the Committee, must be acted upon if school performance is to be improved.

Alaska State Goals of Education and School District Accountability

Assuring the public of adequate school district accountability is a responsibility of the legislature. Before schools can be held accountable for the responsibility delegated to them, however, the legislature must define what it is that districts are accountable for. At a time when it is generally agreed that reforms and restructuring in education are imperative, it becomes essential that the legislature, by statute, declare what is expected of the school districts which they have created and fund. Only then can measures of accountability be specified.

Within this concept, five questions have been identified:

1. What should state-mandated goals require of school districts and students?
2. What should be the role of the State Board of Education in specifying and monitoring state goals?
3. What measures of accountability can be used to assess reliably school district compliance with state-mandated goals?
4. What elements of the curriculum, if any, should be mandated as a means to assure district compliance with state goals?
5. What incentives in addition to routine foundation support can or should the legislature provide for school districts in order to reach statewide goals, particularly in districts where special needs are found to exist?

Answers to these questions, in part, become the essence of this section of this report.

Alaska state goals set the tone for the type, scope, and quality of schooling the people of the state require of their schools. These goals should reflect the purposes of state–supported public education; they are a statement of the state's philosophy of education.

Examples of goals of all kinds can be found among the various states of the country, from the noble to the ridiculous. Examples of the very specific include laws such as found in Maine where "The public schools must teach virtue and morality for not less than one-half hour per week..."[10] (Found in Maine goals of education). In an example from California, one goal requires that "Each teacher shall endeavor to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles of morality, truth, justice, patriotism, and a true comprehension of the rights, duties, and dignity of the American citizenship, including kindness toward domestic pets...."

Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, has asked, "...is it possible to serve all students and also find a coherent purpose for our schools?" Likewise, it may be asked, should Alaska's goals favor statewide needs at the expense of local district needs? Or, conversely, should they favor local needs at the expense of state needs? By examining the strength of the value of local self-determination along with the strength of the need for success of education on a statewide basis the dilemma of two conflicting influences on policy are exposed. Thus, the challenge is, on one hand, to provide statewide goals that demand enough and that are specific enough to raise standards across Alaska but which are, on the other hand, flexible enough and broad enough to permit local school districts to develop programs that meet their local needs. This is the first of several issues the legislature must address if ultimately school performance is to be improved and successfully monitored.

There are presently bills before the legislature that if enacted would establish state goals (purposes) of education. These bills were introduced as an outgrowth of the Special Senate Committee's report on school performance. In that report, the Special Senate Committee recommended that the legislature declare what the purposes of schooling are and require that school districts be held accountable for them. The key term used in the Senate report is "purpose of education," thus avoiding the problem created by legislatures in other states in recent years where overly specific and restrictive "goals" of schooling have been cast in law. In part, CS for House Bill No. 231 reads:

> "Sec. 14.03.015. STATE EDUCATION POLICY. It is the policy of this state that the purpose of education is to help ensure that all students will succeed in their education and work, shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves, exemplify the best values of society, and be effective in improving the character and quality of the world about them."

This portion of the bill is in keeping with testimony given throughout the state. The idea of the need for state goals of education in statute have received widespread support; however, the goal is so broad that it includes little that can be used to develop criteria for measuring school district accountability. By this the Committee does not mean that the legislature should reject this statement of purpose. On the contrary, the proposed purposes are appropriate to a hierarchy of state goals. Being general, they serve as guiding principles for the specific goals currently being developed by the State Board of Education.

In its paper, "Outcomes for Public Education," the State Board currently is developing a series of comprehensive goals of schooling aimed at improving education throughout Alaska. Although some changes may be made in the final draft, the Board expects to complete work on this project soon. By endorsing, or by reference adopting, State Board goals, goals that are much more specific than is practical for the legislature to monitor, the legislature would recognize an important role of the State Board while establishing the criteria by which school districts are to be held accountable.

Goals, or "outcomes for public education" currently being developed by the State Board (as presented in their draft dated November 20, 1989) are as follows:

> "The Alaska State Board of Education believes that the purpose of public education in this State is to ensure that each student possesses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for responsible citizenship, economic productivity, and personal fulfillment."

"Indicators of student success include but are not limited to stated public education outcomes.

"The State Board of education expects that each student in Alaska will:

1. **Communicate effectively**

   - Develop oral language skills through listening and speaking in order to effectively express his or her feelings, ideas and concepts.
   - Develop reading comprehension skills to respond to the written information he or she faces in daily activities. The student will also develop positive attitudes toward reading as a lifelong activity.
   - Develop awareness and appreciation of languages other than English to promote understanding and communication among people of different cultures.
   - Learn to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.
   - Be able to understand numbers, equations, and graphs well enough to make decisions based on that information, and to communicate mathematical ideas in oral and written form, using standard vocabulary and notation.

2. **Think logically and critically**

   - Develop thoughtful responses to new information and ideas.
   - Solve problems using different modes of inquiry and analysis.
   - Be curious about the world and himself or herself, and be open to new ideas.
   - Develop decision-making skills.
   - Evaluate situations with a mathematical content to determine the relevant problem-solving strategies to use, and use the chosen strategies competently and appropriately.
   - Develop and practice vigorous study skills and habits.

3. **Discover and nurture his or her own creative talents**

   - Develop an aesthetic appreciation for the world around us.
   - Participate in multi-media, interdisciplinary thematic projects and activities.
   - Use divergent thinking and a variety of media to understand and express the rich complexity of our world yesterday, today and tomorrow.
   - Discover and nurture creative talents of individuals and groups.

4. **Master essential technological skills**

   - Communicate effectively in a global society, including use of computers, video, and audio technologies.
   - Learn information retrieval skills to gather, analyze, and evaluate new information and opinions.
   - Critically evaluate information presented by the mass media.

5. **Demonstrate responsible citizenship**

   - Develop the values needed to be a responsible citizen and to actively participate in a democratic society.
   - Acquire basic knowledge skills and the self concept needed to be a global citizen who accepts diversity and respects people of other cultures.
   - Participate in extracurricular activities and/or community service projects, developing social skills in leadership, cooperation and communication.
   - Develop an understanding of his or her relationship to the environment and a commitment to the wise use of resources.
   - Recognize and learn parenting skills in order to nurture healthy growth and development in others.

6. **Develop a commitment to health and fitness**

   - Demonstrate a commitment to his or her physical and mental well-being.
   - Incorporate healthful practices as a lifelong response to social, environmental and physical changes.

7. **Develop personal responsibility to sustain oneself economically**

   - Become familiar with the expectations and be prepared for the traditional and nontraditional opportunities of the local, national, and international work place.
   - Develop the desire to continue to learn.
   - Acquire a healthy, realistic work ethic.
   - Develop economic and consumer skills necessary for making informed choices that enhance the quality of life.

8. **Acquire a positive self-image**

   - Learn about himself or herself and develop a positive and realistic self-image.
   - Experience success in activities that develop his or her talents and skills and build his or her self-esteem.
   - Learn to form satisfying relationships with others based on respect, trust, cooperation, and caring.[11]

The Joint Committee commends the State Board for developing these "statements of outcome," or goals of Alaskan education, through its task force on educational outcomes and urges their early completion in final form and adoption in regulation.

However, a statement of purposes of education promulgated by the legislature and a list of goals of education prescribed by the State Board provide for only the state's side of the balance between state and local interests. School district and local community needs also must be reflected in policy. To balance the equation, then, local goals, developed at the local level through local boards with community involvement, must also be developed. A full range of statements that spell out what is expected of public education would

then be complete. These statements, or collective goals of education, would also make it possible to define how educational achievement is to be measured and reported. Therefore:

IT IS RECOMMENDED that a bill on the goals of education be enacted by the Sixteenth Alaska Legislature. Such a bill must declare the purposes of education as prescribed by the legislature. It must require that the State Board of Education adopt the goals it has developed in its statement of educational outcomes and it must require all local districts and REAAs to establish local goals of education that reflect needs consistent with local conditions and expectations.

Passage of this legislation will establish uniform expectations of schooling necessary to meet statewide societal needs. At the same time this legislation will provide for differences among regions of the state, enabling local districts to provide for local needs that may be unique to individual communities. From the standpoint of the overall responsibility of the legislature, a benchmark from which the legislature can develop and require school district accountability will be created.

Legislatively Mandated Measures of Achievement

"Oversight is one of the more difficult and least rewarding forms of legislative activity, but only through such efforts can thoughtful policy adjustments be made."

Denis Doyle and Terry Hartle, 1985.

Of all the subjects associated with school performance improvement, none is more controversial than mandatory measurement of achievement, the means by which school districts account for state education functions delegated to them by the legislature. Controversial or not, if we are to improve the education of Alaska's populace, assessment of school performance must be an ongoing and thorough process. Thus, the legislature needs to consider all types of school performance measurement and can not leave this responsibility solely to school districts.

The most commonly used measures of accountability are numerical indicators of performance. These have been described by

Kirst as "...statewide numerical measures of trends in educational variables."[12] In California, for example, a system of statewide targets and individual school profiles with numerous uniform indicators, including test scores, changes in course enrollment patterns, number of drop outs, and performance of college freshmen are used to monitor school performance.[13] In Illinois, a state-mandated school district reporting system measures such things as relationships of average class size to test scores, high school size to ACT scores, expenditure per pupil to test scores, and even the relationship of teacher salaries to student test scores.

Among the several numerical indicators of school performance, student scores on standardized, nationally normed tests are the most frequently used. Across the country the number of standardized tests that students of all ages now take has increased substantially in recent years. There is a growing belief, however, that there has been an over dependance on their use. In Alaska their use has grown increasingly controversial. Reasons for and against the use of standardized tests, briefly stated, include the following perceptions of the problem:

Arguments frequently given against the use of standardized tests stress that equal educational opportunity will not necessarily yield similar scores on similar tests for all subgroups. "The greatest concern about tests is that they are biased against—and therefore unfair to—minorities."[14] The cultural backgrounds of the test developers, the way the tests have been standardized, and the cultural differences among racial and ethnic subgroups all tend to skew the results and cast doubt on their validity, especially as predictors of potential success of test takers. Simply put, reliance on standardized tests as the means to measure intellectual potential among cultural minorities, the argument goes, fails to take into account that different cultural backgrounds give rise to different talents and interests.[15]

Addressing the contrary view, Gregory Anrig, President of the Educational Testing Service, has advanced some of the most frequently accepted arguments in favor of standardized testing:

> "1) Test results provide a way for the public to monitor educational standards over time. Test results also help teachers and school officials to identify weaknesses in instruction and curriculum. 2) Test results provide the data that enable parents and others to keep the pressure on communities, schools, and educators to `close the gap' between the performance of [minority] students and that of [others]—a pressure that is finally bringing results. 3) Test results dramatically document two facts: that federal programs such as Head Start and Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act have very positive long-term educational effects and that poor children can and will learn, when given the help and the kind of instruction they need."[16]

Because of these reasons, proponents of their use argue that standardized tests have had a more positive than negative effect on school performance. Their continued use, it is contended, enables the growth of student performance to be measured, provides reasons for adjustments to the curriculum where necessary, and justifies expenditures for extraordinary program and teacher support when deficiencies are discovered.

The Joint Committee accepts both arguments. This position suggests that Alaska should not rely solely on standardized tests as a means of determining the level of success of school performance, nor should non-standardized measurement be relied on exclusively. This position also means that standardized tests should be used over time in a way that will show growth, or the lack of it, in the acquisition of a given body of knowledge generally accepted as necessary to be a productive member of a statewide or national society in adult life. It also means that the state should provide for local needs and accept, indeed, require measures of school performance other than standardized tests. If local school districts are required to declare local goals, they should be required to declare how they intend to measure the extent to which these goals have been reached.

Because of the many differences among regions of Alaska, there may be several appropriate kinds and levels of accountability that can be used. Alaska, among all the states, can make a case for the need to utilize a full range of performance indicators, some of which should be developed locally that take into account Alaskan

conditions while simultaneously providing for a standardized comparison with the rest of the country. With information gathered this way and analyzed objectively, programs of instruction can be selected and developed by teachers and principals that fit their local needs as well as those of the state as a whole. Used properly, non-standardized performance indicators can provide a way to substantiate or refute the worth of standardized tests, especially where minority youth are involved.

As identified in the Special Senate Committee's report on school performance there are many ways to assess the adequacy of schooling. Examples of both standardized and non-standardized indicators of school performance used in other states include:

1. **Indicators of mastery of basic skills and knowledge**, such as standardized achievement tests (ACT and SAT) and specialized tests such as computer literacy and college success rates. This indicator could also include performances such as writing assessment and portfolio development.

2. **Indicators of competence in life skills**, such as proportions of graduates in jobs training, proportion of graduates registered to vote, and opinion of employers regarding performance of graduates.

3. **Indicators of motivation to learn**, such as attendance and graduation rates, numbers of suspensions and expulsions, enrollment in advanced placement, and enrollment in postsecondary education.

4. **Indicators of client/staff perceptions**, such as community perception of school outcomes, student/parent/staff assessment of school climate and employer ranking of satisfaction with school programs.

These and other indicators, set against state and local goals, lend themselves to the adoption and use of "school district report cards" that will meet the need of school districts to account to their communities, to the State Board of Education, to the Governor and to the Legislature. Therefore:

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the legislature require by statute that each school district and REAA in Alaska shall submit to parents and other interested members of the local community, the State Board of Education, the Governor, and the Legislature a "school report card" assessing the performance of its schools and students. The report card shall be an index of school performance measured against statewide and local standards and will provide information to make prior year comparisons and set future year targets. The report card shall be developed by the State Board of Education in consultation with appropriate representatives from the education profession, local school boards, and local citizens at large and be available for use in time for reporting on school performance at the close of the 1991 school year.

School Performance Improvement Incentives

As described in the first chapter of this report, the formal goal of the Joint Committee is improved levels of public education among all pupils of the state, **while recognizing that there are groups of students whom schools persistently have not served well**. These are the students often referred to in recent years as being "at risk." Many definitions of the term have been advanced, and at the moment the State Board of Education is in the process of developing a definition that will be appropriate to the educational needs of the state and individual students. The Joint Committee awaits this definition, but agrees that generally these are the students who have not performed at their innate level of ability for a variety of reasons and that their potential for success is unfulfilled. Although they are found throughout the state, certain regions, especially rural villages and neighborhoods with low family income in urban centers, account for a disproportionate number of these students. Depending on the definition eventually adopted, it is frequently estimated that those students critically in need represent approximately 25 to 30 percent of school age children in the state as a whole; in some regions these figures are much higher, often in excess of 50 percent. Regardless of the definition and the number of students who fall into any specific category, it can be argued that all children are at risk in one way or another and all should be eligible for special services when identified.

Programs, at both the federal and state levels, developed on behalf of these students over the years, have met with mixed success. If a generalization can be made about the extent to which they have worked, it is agreed that the closer to home that the projects have been conceived and carried out, the better have been their chances to be successful.

With this idea in mind, the Special Senate Committee on School Performance recommended "that the legislature establish a competitive grant program to encourage schools, in partnership with the communities they serve, to plan and carry out changes that will help them become more effective places of learning for all" (pp.47-49). The Joint Committee endorses this recommendation as one means to find solutions to root causes of low school performance.

Taking the recommendation of the Special Senate Committee one step further and aware that programs developed and executed cooperatively between the community and the school, especially in the villages, have had the most beneficial results, the Joint Committee takes the position that a special category of competitive grants be established for school advisory committees in rural villages or neighborhood schools in addition to those advocated in the Senate's report. Under such an arrangement advisory boards would have authority to apply directly to a school incentive grants fund in the Department of Education, independent from (but not without articulation with) superintendent or central district board review or veto.

Another category of incentive grant funds should be reserved in a like manner for teachers and building principals working to apply directly to the grants fund with the provision that grant applications may be made directly to the Department of Education and with awards going directly to the school.

"Education is more vital and healthy when it is kept close to the needs of the people and when they feel they have a genuine stake in educational institutions of their own making and for which they have a large measure of responsibility."7

R. Freeman Butts, 1955

To effectuate the programs suggested above, a school incentives grants fund should be appropriated to the Department of Education as a special fund and be operated under rules established by the State Board of Education. To encourage inventiveness and uniqueness appropriate to conditions and problems identified at the local level, few limitations should be placed on categories of programs that may be proposed. Lisbeth Shore, in her recent book on programs of eduction that depend on cooperative arrangements, observed, "It is not enough simply to encourage or require educators and parents to make decisions together.... States can help by providing assistance to school[s]...that are willing to experiment and that will share their experiences with others. [For example, a] competitive... grant program could be offered to districts that are willing to experiment with schoolsite management programs." [17]

Therefore:

IT IS RECOMMENDED that legislation be enacted that will empower the Commissioner of Education to initiate an incentive grants program with a fund separate from the foundation program. The State Board of Education shall establish the particulars of the program in regulation that will enable advisory boards, teachers, and principals to apply for funds under the program so as to acquire the financial resources necessary to carry out school improvement initiatives. Such initiatives shall be designed to remediate or prevent shortcomings in schooling among that portion of the school population that fits the State Board's definition of "at risk" students.

The Commissioner shall not award more than two grants in each five year period to the same applicant. Furthermore, the Commissioner shall provide for the evaluation and dissemination of findings of each project funded in such a way that all districts will have the opportunity to profit from the program. The Joint Committee recommends that no less than $3,000,000 be appropriated annually to this fund over the next five years. (Prorated, this amount is equivalent to approximately $100.00 per year.)

Health and Family Service Programs Related to School Performance

It may be that there are no root causes of inadequate school performance greater than environmental and social handicaps, especially those that are the result of chronic poverty. It is argued by some, and there has been much testimony in support of this concept, that the legislature must provide the means for all children to be able to start school prepared to learn. The public is becoming aware of the high stakes that all of us have in children who contend with one or more of the following environmental and social handicaps: chronic poverty; single parent households; especially households where parents are unable to provide parental guidance; substance abuse, especially alcohol and illegal drugs; unplanned or unwanted teenage pregnancy; and trauma from exposure to violent behavior, especially child abuse. A high incidence of school problems associated with these handicaps has been well documented, and they are the subjects of concern most consistently expressed by those testifying at legislative hearings, especially in rural areas. In the same vein, the State Board of Education Task Force has made the point that

> It is commonly accepted that many social issues place children at risk of [being deprived from] having healthy, productive lives.... Social services issues must be dealt with if we believe that dealing with the whole child in his/her mileu—the family, neighborhood, community—is the most effective way of addressing the conditions of 'at-riskness' of Alaskan children and youth. [18]

If the legislature is to is to address root causes of poor school performance, it must first concentrate, "on families whose children are vulnerable because they are growing up in poverty or with environmental handicaps.... The prestigious Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy declared that the cost of our present failure to educate all American children will be `a steady erosion in the American standard of living'...it would be fatal to assume that America can succeed if only a portion of school children succeed."[19] The same can be said with conviction for Alaska.

Even with so many indicators of handicaps to school readiness, there are encouraging signs that something can be done about social dysfunction. But without a unified, long term, sustained effort on the part of the various people and agencies charged with the responsibility to provide health, social, legal and educational

services, there is little likelihood that shortcomings endemic in so many communities of the state will be overcome.

Elsewhere in the country, where economic, social, and health care problems are acute and have been found to be barriers to learning, certain characteristics of the problem have been shown to be universal. Lisbeth B. Schorr has identified three themes that describe conditions in the rest of the country that apply equally well in Alaska:

1) Risk factors leading to later damage occur more frequently among children in families that are poor and still more frequently among families that are persistently poor and live in areas of concentrated poverty.

2) The plight of the children bearing these risks is not just individual and personal; it requires a societal response.

3) The knowledge to help is available; there is a reasonably good match between known risk factors and the interventions to reduce them.[20]

If it can be accepted that the knowledge to help is available, the problem becomes one of finding ways to coordinate and apply that knowledge and dedicate the resources necessary to be effective over time. No single governmental agency possesses the resources and professional knowledge to manage this task alone. Nor is there any single best way to overcome these problems, especially when Alaska's many subregions are compared and its multicultural population considered. Nevertheless, as indicated at a recent conference on education in Anchorage:

> Prevention and early intervention programs do work. There is an abundance of evidence which documents desirable program and behavioral outcomes as well as cost effectiveness. The question should not revolve around "Does prevention work?", but rather "Which prevention strategy is appropriate?" "Who should have the lead responsibility?" and "How do we shift the balance to prevention from the current predominant reliance on remediation?"[21]

These are the urgent questions that Alaskans must find answers to without delay.

Evidence that has accumulated in recent years indicates that early intervention among children with environmental handicaps makes a difference when developed and carried out as cooperative efforts among the various agencies and disciplines concerned with child care and schooling. An improved level of professional expertise among the staffs working in the so–called "helping professions" and willingness among the people in them to work cooperatively with school authorities and the community at large have now developed.[22] The potential for this approach to work in Alaska is promising, and already there have been efforts initiated among some state personnel to examine problems from an inter-agency perspective. However, sustained, coordinated agency, school, and community efforts required to make a lasting difference among those children now unprepared or unable to learn because of environmental shortcomings will require prompting and funding by the legislature.

It has been found that among states making efforts along these lines it is essential that they be initiated at the highest levels of government and that some sort of formal structure that compels joint approaches to problem solving and service delivery be established in statute. A positive correlation has been found between success and the extent to which local populations and school personnel are involved in planning and executing of programs.[23]

Therefore:

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the legislature establish a permanent inter-agency coordinating committee headed by a commissioner and consisting of representatives of the Departments of Education, Health and Social Services, Law, Community and Regional Affairs, and others who may have appropriate roles in addressing the problems of overcoming environmental handicaps responsible for inadequate school performance. This group shall be required to identify the most critical social and health barriers to learning, establish plans to overcome them, be responsible for their implementation, and issue annual reports on activities and programs.

Long Term and Immediate Needs for State Supported and Coordinated Early Childhood and Parenting Education

Other root causes that deny children the means or motivation necessary to succeed at schooling and which will require multi-agency cooperation, are inadequate or insufficient early childhood and parenting education programs. While early childhood education and parenting education can be looked upon as two separate endeavors, they overlap enough that they are included here under a single heading. Likewise, child care, preschool and early childhood development, while they may be discrete topics, need to be examined concomitantly. Although the Senate Special Committee Report on School Performance did not directly address early childhood education, the Joint Committee has found this subject to be of such overriding concern, especially in rural villages, it now ranks high on the list of subjects for priority legislative action. Many witnesses were of the belief that academic performance can be substantially improved through more and better preschool, child care, and parenting education programs. And the work of the State Board of Education Task Force on At-Risk Early Childhood, Parenting, and Primary Language has shown that "high quality early childhood and family support programs are likely to benefit at-risk children and the larger society by (a) reducing the number of children in later costly special education programs in schools; (b) helping children avoid school failure; and (c) preventing the need for costly social and judicial services later in life."[24]

Not many years ago preschool-age children were not a major political issue. The programs that were developed came mostly from the federal government, either as Head Start or Title I (now Chapter I) funds. Now, just as a large number of unmarried young mothers and a breakdown in traditional family composition and structure have given rise to an ever-increasing group of poorly cared for children throughout Alaska, federal support for early childhood education has declined in real dollars. The number of preschool-age children is growing in Alaska's villages at a rate far in excess of the country as a whole. Programs that address the problems growing out of this situation are far from adequate.

In Alaska approximately two out of every three children who qualify for Head Start programs are unable to participate because of insufficient appropriations by Congress. At present it costs on

average $5000 per Head Start child per year. Currently there are 1,800 children participating in the state, but there are known to be more than 2000 children in the rural areas who meet all criteria to be involved in Head Start but are unable to attend because of insufficient funds and facilities. Likewise, there are many children in urban areas who qualify, including at least 900 in Anchorage alone, who are denied the opportunity to get a "head start" for want of funding.

Since the federal government has failed to provide adequate funding to serve all the children who qualify for programs on the basis of financial and social need, some states have turned inward for the funds necessary to meet the needs of early childhood education. By 1989, 31 states including Alaska had appropriated funds for state-initiated prekindergarten programs and/or direct contributions to Head Start programs. Alaskans have shown an interest in doing more; a few local districts have assumed some responsibility, but the state has been unable to proceed far enough without clear direction and better cost estimates. The current situation nationally and in Alaska has been summed up well by the National Association of State Boards of Education Task Force on Early Childhood:

> We have a diverse, underfunded, and uncoordinated system for delivering programs to young children. Public education leaders can be a powerful and constructive force for strengthening this system. If they act in partnership with other early childhood programs, our chances for increasing and maximizing resources and quality in all settings that serve young children will be greatly improved.[25]

The Center for Policy Research in Education has pointed out that "policy making in the field of early childhood education is still in its infancy, and most states have little experience in providing early childhood programs." There are three issues that must be reconciled in order to develop effective policy:

1. The historical rift between the 'educational' and 'custodial' models of early childhood education.

2. The historical conflicts between the elementary school and early childhood education communities over purposes, methods, and control.

3. The tradeoffs necessary between the costs of programs and their quality.[26]

All three of these problems are to be found in Alaska. There are differences in the extent to which there should be parental participation in learning activities, differences in teaching philosophies, and differences in staff qualifications and staffing patterns, all of which have a direct bearing on differences in quality and costs.

As stressed in the report from the Center for Policy Research in Education, "reconciling the conflicts between these philosophical, operational, and resource components of early childhood programs is crucial to formulating careful policy decisions." The center identified seven questions defining issues that must first be answered to the satisfaction of legislature before a statewide policy can be formulated and programs initiated.

1. What children should be served?
2. How long should programs operate?
3. What level of funding should be provided, and how should state and local revenues and parent fees be used?
4. What types of funding mechanisms should be used?
5. Which state agency(ies) should be responsible for administering the early childhood education programs?
6. What types of quality controls should be instituted?
7. What types of teacher preparation and certification should be required?[27]

These questions apply equally well to issues in parenting education, in particular where teenage mothers are concerned. Few young mothers, especially those living in poverty, are given the opportunity to learn what is now known about parenting psychology and techniques. Both early childhood education and parenting education are seen as crucial to early intervention where environmental barriers to learning are found.

The issues and questions that have been identified under this topic are complex; properly resolved, they hold answers that will go far towards helping children succeed, and ultimately society.

Three quarters of Americans say they are prepared to pay higher taxes to provide more and better day care and early childhood education; 88 percent want government to provide more health coverage and day care services for children of the poor. As indicated in the report of a recent Lewis Harris poll, "The times are changing, perhaps more rapidly than might be imagined...; people not only want to help children generally, they want particularly to help the children who are living in poverty.... [The need to help] is a plaintive and poignant demand that simply will not go away."[28]

Therefore two recommendations follow, one that addresses a short term solution to immediate problems; a second that addresses long range solutions to problems that will continue to require the attention of the legislature for some time to come:

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the legislature augment existing funds for Head Start by making up the difference between the amount now provided by the federal government and the amount necessary to fully fund the program consistent with existing standards and qualifying conditions as now administered by the Department of Community and Regional affairs. Estimates place this cost at $10,000,000 for the first year as a means to catch up with training, additional sites, and facilities.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the legislature, by resolution, establish a Commission to address the issues and questions on early childhood and parenting education that pertain to the education of Alaska's young children, with particular attention given to those children with environmental handicaps. Included among the Commission's responsibility shall be the development of a plan for a statewide program of early childhood education and parenting education and preparation of a report on its findings with recommendations to the legislature no later than May, 1991.

Conclusions

This report, being the first of two that the Joint Committee on School Performance has been charged with producing, covers the subjects that the Committee has examined since it organized in August, 1989. In addition to the subjects covered in this report, the Committee has identified several other subjects for priority legisla-

tive attention. While there may be no way to agree on the rank order by which subjects are presented, it has been agreed that each is of critical importance and deserves the attention of the legislature. The second report is to be presented on the first day of the first session of the Seventeenth Legislature and will conclude the work of the Joint Committee. It will include, among other things, a continuation of the description and analysis of the subjects already identified but not covered in the first report. Subjects to be addressed in the second report include:

1. **Teacher and school administrator professional development and competency.**
2. **Qualified training for all school personnel assigned to special, extra-ordinary and multicultural schools.**
3. **Teacher and administrator certificate reform.**
4. **Incentive programs to encourage professional development.**
5. **Teacher tenure of as a measure of competency.**
6. **Alaska's systems of school governance and administrative organization as they relate to school performance.**
7. **Expanded and enhanced program of Alaska studies, including Alaska History, government, geography, cultures, and economics.**
8. **Distance education and a review of the amount, type, and scheduling of educational programing available via satellite.**
9. **Improved education research, program evaluation, and dissemination of findings.**

One topic not yet listed that repeatedly surfaced during Committee meetings is school finance and the foundation program. The Committee recognizes the need for this subject to come before the legislature in a new form, but because of the complexity of this subject the Committee is still considering various ways it might be examined before making specific recommendations. Moreover, the Department of Education is currently considering an in-house

study of the foundation program. The Committee endorses this study and believes it should be supported with additional funds to the Department if necessary to carry out the study.

Completing work on the list of additional subjects still to be covered is an ambitious undertaking. But since the Committee has had the opportunity to examine the many issues that confront the school improvement movement, it has become obvious that each of the remaining topics must be addressed if school performance is to improve. The second report will be prepared along the lines of this paper and will be submitted on the first day of the Seventeenth Alaska State Legislature as required by the resolution that established the Joint Committee.

In the recent book *Excellence in Education: The States Take Charge* in which schooling in America was described, the conclusion was reached that "**just as the opportunities for genuine and lasting reform have never been greater, so too have the dangers of failure never been more stark....**"[29] Certainly this statement holds true for Alaskans today.

"In Today's world, a youngster who leaves school unable to read, write, and do simple arithmetic faces a bleak future. When a substantial proportion of boys and girls leave school uneducated, the rest of us face a bleak future."

Lisbeth Shore, 1989

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Increasingly, Alaskans are becoming aware that there are unacceptable levels of educational achievement among a significant portion of Alaska youth. Not only are individual youth at risk, so too is society as a whole. Left uncorrected, the cost to the state will be immeasurable in unfulfilled human potential and millions of dollars spent on remedial programs that will never restore what has been lost. Corrected now, the cost still will be high, as much as $65,000,000 over the next five years. **Ignored, it will be many times that figure**.

Just as Alaska is made up of many diverse subregions and population groups, so too are its schools diverse in such areas as their student bodies, programs of instruction, methods of organization and levels of success. There is ample evidence to show that many schools in Alaska are doing well; many students, based on national test norms, are achieving at the fiftieth percentile or better. The legislature needs to acknowledge the success of these programs and assure that these schools have the means to continue to provide adequate or better programs of education.

However, a large body of evidence shows that many students are not doing well; unquestionably, many are at or nearing crisis levels. These are the students whose educational needs perennially

have not been served well. At best, many will be unable to function as productive members of contemporary society or in the future. At worst they will become wards of the state in one way or another, victims of low self-esteem, of substance abuse, of violent crime, of suicide.

These students are found in all school districts of Alaska, although in much greater proportions in some than others, especially where high levels of poverty are endemic or inadequate second language development is a factor. Two years ago, in twenty-eight of Alaska's fifty-five school districts, the average percentile of students' achievement scores was acutely and chronically below the level of the national average, as was the percentage of students that scored below the national 50th percentile. In the Department of Education's forthcoming report of the 1989 statewide standardized testing program it is shown that average scores of Alaska students has continued to decline and that the range in student performance between districts remains great; from a low average of twentieth percentile in some districts to an average of seventy–fifth percentile in the highest achieving districts.

One of the reasons for the current interest in the need for improved schooling came about because of the legislature's requirement that the Department of Education compile and report statewide standardized test results. However, reliance on standardized tests as a means to assess the worth of Alaska's school programs has been widely criticized. The Joint Committee agrees that these tests may not necessarily be the most satisfactory or accurate measure of school performance required of Alaskan youth. But regardless of how standardized tests are perceived, by several other measures of educational achievement it can be said that school performance is not at a satisfactory level. Simply put, many pupils are not acquiring the intellectual skills necessary to succeed in any sense of the word. **For instance, in some communities as many as 60 to 70 percent of Alaska Native students drop out of the system prior to high school completion**.

Although in recent years Alaska has relied entirely on the traditional system of local control of education as a means to organize, deliver, and evaluate public education, it has become increasingly apparent that the legislature, as the body constitutionally responsible for public education, must review the condition of schooling

and where necessary take appropriate remedial measures. Alaska's young people deserve the profound attention of the legislature and the full resources of the state if they eventually are to lead satisfying personal lives and if the state is to thrive in the future. It may cost more to remedy the situation than some are now prepared to spend. But one way or the other, now or later, more will have to be spent on today's youth at risk. Either we must improve schooling now, or provide more social welfare, public health, and law enforcement programs in the future. It has been estimated that intervention now may be five to ten times less costly than repairing or coping with damage through remedial welfare and judiciary programs in the future, not to mention individual personal losses to many.

It was on the premise that the legislature has an obligation to invoke its oversight responsibilities by "helping schools succeed at helping all children learn" that the Joint Committee on School Performance was established by passage of Committee Substitute for House Concurrent Resolution 18. In that resolution the Joint Committee was charged with reviewing the work of the Senate Special Committee on School Performance and **identifying subjects for priority legislative attention that might improve schooling in Alaska**.

In so doing, the Joint Committee was instructed to submit two reports on its findings, the first due on January 23, 1990 (the report in hand), and a final report on the first day of the First Regular Session of the Seventeenth Legislature. Although the Joint Committee has had only a few months to develop the positions taken in this report and has made plans to continue with the remaining issues in its final report, there are some subjects that cannot wait until 1991 to be addressed. **Thus, the recommendations made at this time are considered to be of the highest priority and address the root causes of the most vexing problems yet identified by the Joint Committee**.

Recommendations

Generally school reform movements can be divided into four basic categories: (1) control, organization and structure; (2) professional development of school staffs; (3) the academic experience of students, and (4) financing. Since these are not mutually exclusive categories, that is, each depends on the other to make up a school system, the Joint Committee identified subjects in need of immediate attention that are interrelated and cut across all four of these categories.

IN PRIORITY ORDER, THE MOST URGENT TOPICS FOR LEGISLATIVE CONSIDERATION ARE:

1. MANDATED ALASKA STATE GOALS OF EDUCATION

[Referenced to pages 20 through 26 in the main report.]

It is recommended that a bill on the goals of education be enacted by the Sixteenth Alaska Legislature. Such a bill must declare the purposes of education as prescribed by the legislature. It shall require that the State Board of Education adopt the goals it has developed in its statement of educational outcomes and it shall require all local districts and REAAs to establish local goals of education that reflect needs consistent with local conditions and expectations.

2. LEGISLATIVELY MANDATED MEASURES OF ACHIEVEMENT

[Referenced to pages 26 through 30 in the main report.]

It is recommended that the legislature require by statute that each school district and REAA in Alaska shall submit to parents and other interested members of the local community, the State Board of Education, the Governor, and the Legislature a "school report card" assessing the performance of its schools and students. The report card shall be an index of school performance measured against statewide and local standards and will provide information to make prior year comparisons and set future year targets. The report card shall be developed by the State Board of Education in consultation with appropriate representatives from the education profession, local school boards, and local citizens at large and be

available for use in time for reporting on school performance at the close of the 1991 school year.

3. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT INCENTIVES

[Referenced to pages 30 through 32 in the main report.]

It is recommended that legislation be enacted that will empower the Commissioner of Education to initiate an incentive grants program with a fund separate from the foundation program. The State Board of Education shall establish the particulars of the program in regulation that will enable advisory boards, teachers, and principals to apply for funds under the program so as to acquire the financial resources necessary to carry out school improvement initiatives. Such initiatives shall be designed to remediate or prevent shortcomings in schooling among that portion of the school population that fits the State Board's definition of "at risk" students.

The Commissioner shall not award more than two grants in each five year period to the same applicant. Furthermore, the Commissioner shall provide for the evaluation and dissemination of findings of each project funded in such a way that all districts will have the opportunity to profit from the program. The Joint Committee recommends that no less than $3,000,000 be appropriated annually to this fund over the next five years. (Prorated, this amount is equivalent to approximately $100.00 per year.)

4. HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICE PROGRAMS RELATED TO SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

[Reference to pages 33 through 35 in the main report.]

It is recommended that the legislature establish a special interagency coordinating committee headed by a commissioner and consisting of representatives of the Departments of Education, Health and Social Services, Law, Community and Regional Affairs, and others who may have appropriate roles in addressing the problems of overcoming physical and social environmental responsible for inadequate school performance. This group shall be required to identify the most critical social and health barriers to learning, establish plans to overcome them, be responsible for their implementation, and issue annual reports on activities and programs.

5. LONG TERM AND IMMEDIATE NEEDS FOR STATE SUPPORTED AND COORDINATED EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PARENTING EDUCATION

[Referenced to pages 36 through 39 in the main report.]

Two recommendations, one short term and one long term, are necessary under this heading:

1. It is recommended that the legislature augment existing funds for Head Start by making up the difference between the amount now provided by the federal government and the amount necessary to fully fund programs consistent with existing standards and qualifying conditions as now administered by the Department of Community and Regional Affairs. Estimates place this cost at $10,000,000.

2. It is recommended that the legislature, by resolution, establish a Commission to address the issues and questions on early childhood and parenting education that pertain to the education of Alaska's young children, with particular attention given to those children with environmental handicaps. Included among the Commission's responsibilities shall be the development of plans for statewide programs of early childhood education and parenting education and preparation of a report on its findings with recommendations to the legislature no later than May, 1991.

Summary

The recommendations itemized above are only some of the topics for priority legislative consideration identified by the Joint Committee. They are, however, the subjects believed to be the ones most urgently in need of attention if the decline in student academic performance is to be reversed and social dysfunction due to insufficient schooling is to be decreased. It may be argued that other subjects identified for legislative action are of equal or near equal importance. All together, including the topics discussed above, the Joint Committee has identified eight broad categories for priority legislative attention. They are:

1. Mandated school district accountability set against state goals of education.
2. State-supported and coordinated early childhood and parenting education.
3. Coordinated education, health, and family service programs.
4. Improved school personnel professional development and competency.
5. Improved school governance and administrative organization.
6. Mandated programs of instruction, especially expanded and enhanced programs of Alaska studies that include Alaska history, government, geography, cultures, and economics.
7. Improved distance education including educational television by satellite.
8. Improved and expanded educational research, evaluation, and dissemination.

The first three of these categories have been covered in the first report and have given rise to six recommendations covering five subjects. Only the constraints of time have prevented the remaining topics from being advanced to the recommendation stage in this report. All subjects must eventually be addressed in full.

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[25] *Right from the Start*, (National Association of State Boards of Education, 1988, cited by Anne Mitchell in "Old Baggage, New Visions: Shaping Policy for Early Childhood Programs", *Phi delta Kappan*, May, 1989.

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APPENDIX B

STATE OUTCOMES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION
THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION'S STATE STANDARDS FOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE

State Board okays statewide educational outcomes

The State Board of Education on October 12, 1990, adopted eight major outcomes for public education in Alaska. The adoption of the outcomes is a major stepping stone towards developing an education system that shares its responsibilities among schools, parents, businesses and the local community, and makes sure that everyone is working to provide students the skills, knowledge and attitudes they will need for a successful life.

The unanimous board action on the outcomes follows several years of development and the involvement of numerous groups and individuals. The board has held meetings with many education groups, state and local parent organizations, employers and others. Last spring the board mailed a brochure to 15,000 leaders of school businesses, parent and other organizations throughout the state. Five months later, return mailers are still trickling into the Department of Education.

In adopting the outcomes, the board called on local school boards and district officials to join in partnership with parents and others in their communities to develop local outcomes based on the statewide outcomes and to devise ways of measuring whether the outcomes are being met.

The board calls the outcomes "state standards for student performance."

Adopted October 12, 1990

State Outcomes for Public Education

The State Board of Education believes that public education is the responsibility of everyone — students, parents, schools, and communities. The Outcomes for Public Education are the state standards for student performance.

The State Board of Education believes **all students can learn; that a student's public education should provide a working knowledge of science, language arts, social studies, mathematics, physical education/health, and the fine arts;** and that each student graduating from a public school will:

❒ Have positive self-esteem

1. Know how to set and achieve personal goals.
2. Be confident and flexible.
3. Recognize and appreciate personal talents and strengths.
4. Form satisfying relationships with others based on respect, trust, cooperation, and compassion.

❒ Communicate effectively

1. Talk about feelings, ideas, and concepts with clarity.
2. Be a good listener.
3. Read, understand and respond to written information faced in daily life.
4. Appreciate the value of reading as a lifelong activity.
5. Write well for a variety of purposes and audiences.

❒ Think logically and critically

1. Think clearly about new information and ideas.
2. Solve problems through different ways of questioning and analysis.
3. Be open to new ideas and be curious about the world and self.
4. Have the skills needed to make good decisions.
5. Understand and use mathematical and scientific ideas.
6. Have good study skills and habits.
7. Process and integrate information.
8. Evaluate and improve ideas through discussions with other people.

(continued on back)

❒ Discover and nurture creative talents

1. Appreciate the world around us.
2. Take part in activities that cut across fields of study.
3. Understand our world and its past, present, and future. Be able to express this understanding in a variety of ways and with different media.
4. Respect and encourage the creative talents of individuals and groups.
5. Demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to express ideas in literature, visual arts, music, dance, and drama.

❒ Master technological skills

1. Communicate in the global society with computers, video, audio, and other technologies.
2. Use technology to gather, analyze, and evaluate information and opinions.
3. Critically evaluate information presented in the mass media.
4. Use computers to process and organize information.
5. Evaluate the uses of technology and its impact on society and the environment.

❒ Be a responsible citizen

1. Understand and participate in the democratic process.
2. Possess the values, knowledge, and ethical behaviors needed to participate in a democratic society.
3. Have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be a citizen of the world who accepts and respects differences in peoples and cultures.

❒ Be a responsible citizen

(continued)

4. Be aware of and appreciate languages other than English.
5. Possess skills in leadership, cooperation, communication, and social responsibility.
6. Understand one's relationship to the environment and be committed to the wise use of resources.
7. Know parenting skills.
8. Understand the past.

❒ Be committed to health and fitness

1. Understand the skills and apply the knowledge needed to promote physical and mental health.
2. Respond positively to life's social, environmental, and physical changes.

❒ Accept personal responsibility for sustaining oneself economically

1. Be prepared for opportunities in the local, national, and international work place.
2. Understand the value of, and necessity for, life-long learning.
3. Possess the skills, values, and work habits necessary for employment.
4. Be a critical consumer with skills for making informed choices.
5. Recognize how doing well in school relates to one's future.

APPENDIX C

CS HOUSE BILL 470 (FINANCE)

AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PARENTING EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE, 1990

Offered: 4/28/90
Referred: Rules

6-2027E

Original sponsor(s): Joint Committee on School Performance

IN THE HOUSE BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 470 (Finance)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

A BILL

For an Act entitled: "An Act establishing an early childhood and parenting education coordinating committee within the Department of Community and Regional Affairs."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

* Section 1. FINDINGS. The legislature finds that an adequate and coordinated system for early childhood and parenting education is essential to the welfare of the children of the state and to the state as a whole. The legislature also finds that there is a need for coordination and communication between agencies charged with early childhood and parenting education programs and that those agencies need to work together to establish long-term policies and a coordinated direction.

* Sec. 2. (a) The early childhood and parenting education coordinating committee is established in the Department of Community and Regional Affairs. The committee is composed of a representative of the State Board of Education, the commissioner of health and social services, the commissioner of community and regional affairs, the commissioner of labor, the commissioner of education, one member of a local parent/teacher association, one local head start or early childhood program parent community member, and two practitioners in the fields of early childhood and parenting education, selected by the governor, who are not emplcyees of the state. The commissioner of education shall serve as the chair of the committee.

(b) Members of the committee serve without compensation but are entitled to per diem and travel expenses authorized for boards and com-

missions under AS 39.20.180.

(c) The committee shall meet as often as necessary to carry out duties required by law.

(d) The committee shall

(1) develop a plan for a statewide program of early childhood education, including the education of children with developmental disabilities, and parenting education;

(2) address the following three issues concerning the development of long-term, effective policies regarding early childhood education:

(A) the historical rift between the educational and custodial models of early childhood education;

(B) the historical conflicts between elementary school and early childhood education over purposes, methods, and control;

(C) the tradeoffs necessary between the costs and quality of early childhood education programs;

(3) answer the following eight questions relating to the formation of a statewide program of early childhood education:

(A) which children shall be served;

(B) how long should early childhood education programs operate;

(C) what level of funding should be provided and how should state and local revenue and parent fees be used;

(D) what types of funding mechanisms should be used;

(E) which state agency or agencies should be responsible for administering early childhood education programs;

(F) what types of program controls should be instituted;

(G) what types of teacher preparation and certification should be required;

(H) what type of curriculum is necessary to meet the needs

of an early childhood education program, especially as they relate to the linguistic, developmental, and cultural needs of children.

(e) The committee shall prepare a report of its findings and submit the report to the governor and the legislature by May 31, 1991.

* Sec. 3. This Act is repealed June 1, 1991.

APPENDIX D

ALASKA STATUTES, CHAPTER 17
PUBLIC SCHOOL FOUNDATION PROGRAM

Chapter 15. School Districts and City Schools.

[Repealed, § 59 ch 98 SLA 1966.]

Chapter 17. Public School Foundation Program.

Article
1. State Aid to Local School Districts (§§ 14.17.010 — 14.17.061)
2. Preparation of Public School Foundation Budget (§§ 14.17.080 — 14.17.150)
3. Procedure for Payment of Public School Foundation Funds to Districts (§§ 14.17.160 — 14.17.190)
4. General Provisions (§§ 14.17.200 — 14.17.250)

Cross references. — For applicability of this chapter to state aid for regional educational attendance areas formed under § 2, ch. 66, SLA 1985, see § 3, ch. 66, SLA 1985 in the Temporary and Special Acts.

Article 1. State Aid to Local School Districts.

Section
10. Public school foundation account
21. State foundation aid
22. Money for centralized correspondence study
25. Local contributions
31. Allowable instructional units
41. Elementary and secondary instructional units
43. Vocational education instructional units
45. Special education instructional units
47. Bilingual education instructional units
51. Area cost differential
56. Instructional unit value

Collateral references. — 68 Am. Jur. 2d Schools, §§ 85-98.

79 C.J.S. Schools and School Districts, §§ 331-353, 376-413.

Right of school district to maintain action based on misapportionment of school money. 105 ALR 1273.

Determination of school attendance, enrollment, or pupil population for purpose of apportionment of funds. 80 ALR2d 953.

Sec. 14.17.010. Public school foundation account. (a) The public school foundation account is established. The account consists of appropriations for distribution to districts and for centralized correspondence study programs under this chapter.

(b) The money of the account may be used only in aid of public schools, including community school programs, and for centralized correspondence study programs as provided by this chapter. (§ 1.08 ch 164 SLA 1962; am § 11 ch 95 SLA 1969; am § 2 ch 190 SLA 1975; am § 1 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Effect of amendments. — The 1987 amendment substituted "and" for "or" following "districts" in the second sentence of subsection (a) and substituted "including community school programs, and" for "or" in subsection (b).

NOTES TO DECISIONS

Legislature decides what types of education are to be publicly supported. — In Alaska the power of deciding what types of education are to be publicly supported, either under the School Foundation Act or by tax exemption, is vested with the legislature. McKee v. Evans, Sup. Ct. Op. No. 740 (File No. 1382), 490 P.2d 1226 (1971).

Sec. 14.17.020. State aid. [Repealed, § 1 ch 238 SLA 1970.]

Sec. 14.17.021. State foundation aid. (a) The amount of state foundation aid for which a school district may qualify in a fiscal year is calculated by subtracting from the basic need defined in (b) of this section the required local contributions under AS 14.17.025(a) and 90 percent of eligible federal impact aid for that fiscal year.

(b) The basic need of a school district is determined by multiplying the area cost differential of the district under AS 14.17.051 by the number of instructional units in the district under AS 14.17.031 and then multiplying that product by the instructional unit value in AS 14.17.056. (§ 4 ch 238 SLA 1970; am §§ 1, 2 ch 81 SLA 1975; am §§ 1, 2 ch 173 SLA 1976; am §§ 2, 3 ch 90 SLA 1977; am §§ 3, 4 ch 26 SLA 1980; am § 2 ch 75 SLA 1986; am § 2 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Cross references. — For additional state foundation aid applicable to fiscal years 1988 — 1990, see § 24, ch. 91, SLA 1987 in the Temporary and Special Acts.

Effect of amendments. — The 1986 amendment rewrote this section.

The 1987 amendment rewrote this section.

NOTES TO DECISIONS

That the legislature has seen fit to delegate certain educational functions to local boards in order that Alaska schools might be adapted to meet the varying conditions of different localities does not diminish constitutionally mandated state control over education under Alaska Const., art. VII, § 1. Macauley v. Hildebrand, Sup. Ct. Op. No. 741 (File No. 1550), 491 P.2d 120 (1971).

Sec. 14.17.022. Money for centralized correspondence study. Money for providing centralized correspondence study programs for students not enrolled in an approved school district correspondence study program includes an allocation from the public school foundation account in an amount calculated by multiplying the instructional unit value in AS 14.17.056 by the total number of instructional units, as determined by applying the number of correspondence students to the formula for elementary schools in AS 14.17.041(b)(1), then multiplying that product by 65 percent. (§ 3 ch 190 SLA 1975; am § 3 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Effect of amendments. — The 1987 amendment substituted "Money" for "Funds" in the catchline and in the first sentence, "includes" for "shall include," "allocation" for "appropriation" and "the formula for elementary schools in AS 14.17.041(b)(1), then multiplying that product by 65 percent" for "AS 14.17.041(a)," deleted "base" preceding "instructional units," and inserted "value in AS 14.17.056."

Sec. 14.17.023. Secondary formula account. [Repealed, § 25 ch 91 SLA 1987.]

Sec. 14.17.025. Local contributions. (a) Local contributions to a city or borough school district shall include at least the lesser of

(1) the equivalent of a four mill tax levy on the full and true value of the taxable real and personal property in the district as of January 1 of the second preceding fiscal year, as determined by the Department of Community and Regional Affairs under AS 14.17.140 and AS 29.45.110; or

(2) 35 percent of the district's basic need for the preceding fiscal year, as determined under AS 14.17.021(b).

(b) In addition to the local contributions required under (a) of this section, local contributions to a city or borough school district in a fiscal year may include no more than the greater of

(1) the equivalent of a two mill tax levy on the full and true value of the taxable real and personal property in the district as of January 1 of the second preceding fiscal year, as determined by the Department of Community and Regional Affairs under AS 14.17.140 and AS 29.45.110; or

(2) the product obtained by multiplying

(A) 21 percent of the instructional unit value in AS 14.17.056;

(B) the number of instructional units approved for the district for the fiscal year; and

(C) the area cost differential of the district under AS 14.17.051.

(c) The department may by regulation reduce the maximum local contribution specified in (b) of this section if necessary to keep revenue or expenditure disparities among school districts in the state in compliance with federal equalization requirements under sec. 5(d) — (2) of P.L. 81-874 (20 U.S.C. 240(d)(2)), as amended, and regulations adopted under it.

(d) Local contributions are not required in a regional educational attendance area. Interest earnings and other local revenue in a regional educational attendance area are not considered local revenue for current operating expenditures, and are subject to regulation and disposition by the department.

(e) A state foundation aid payment may not be made to a city or borough school district in which the requirements of (a) of this section have not been met.

(f) For the first two fiscal years in which a district is subject to this section, local contributions may be less than the amount that would

otherwise be required under (a) of this section. However, local contributions must be at least the greater of

(1) the local contributions, excluding any federal impact aid, for the previous fiscal year; or

(2) the sum of 10 percent of the district's eligible federal impact aid for that year and, for the first year, the equivalent of a two mill tax levy and for the second year, the equivalent of a three mill tax levy, on the full and true value of the taxable real and personal property in the district as of January 1 of the second preceding fiscal year, as determined by the Department of Community and Regional Affairs under AS 14.17.140 and AS 29.45.110.

(g) A school district is eligible for additional state aid in the amount by which the local contributions that would otherwise have been required under (a) of this section exceed the district's actual local contributions under (f) of this section. (§ 4 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Cross references. — For provisions applicable to the calculation of required local contributions for fiscal year 1988, see § 24(a), ch. 91, SLA 1987 in the Temporary and Special Acts.

Sec. 14.17.027. Revenue adjustment. [Repealed, § 25 ch 91 SLA 1987.]

Sec. 14.17.030. Required local effort. [Repealed, § 11 ch 95 SLA 1969.]

Sec. 14.17.031. Allowable instructional units. (a) The department shall adopt regulations defining funding communities within each district which reflect geographic and attendance area factors. For the purpose of determining instructional units, students are counted in the district and the funding community from which they receive educational services. The total number of instructional units in a school district is the sum of the following units for each funding community within the district, as determined by the department

(1) the number of units for elementary and secondary students determined under AS 14.17.041(a) or (b);

(2) the number of units for vocational education determined under AS 14.17.043;

(3) the number of units for special education determined under AS 14.17.045; and

(4) the number of units for bilingual education determined under AS 14.17.047.

(b) For purposes of (a)(1) of this section, in fiscal years beginning after July 1, 1987, 90 percent of the district's total elementary and secondary instructional units for the preceding fiscal year is used if that number is greater than the district's total under (a)(1) of this section for the current fiscal year. (§ 4 ch 238 SLA 1970, am § 3 ch 81

SLA 1975; am § 4 ch 190 SLA 1975; am §§ 4 — 6 ch 90 SLA 1977; am § 1 ch 115 SLA 1978; am §§ 6 — 8 ch 26 SLA 1980; am § 5 ch 75 SLA 1986; am § 5 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Effect of amendments. — The 1986 amendment rewrote this section. The 1987 amendment rewrote this section.

Sec. 14.17.040. Basic need. [Repealed, § 1 ch 238 1970.]

Sec. 14.17.041. Elementary and secondary instructional units. (a) For funding communities that have an average daily membership of less than 200 in grades K-6 or less than 200 in grades 7-12, combined elementary and secondary instructional units are determined under the following table:

ADM	No. Instructional Units
1 — 10	2
11 — 20	2 + ((ADM-10)/5)
21 — 60	4 + ((ADM-20)/8)
61 — 120	9 + ((ADM-60)/12)
121 — 525	14 + ((ADM-120)/15)

(b) For funding communities that are not included under (a) of this section,

(1) instructional units for elementary students are determined by the formula:

units = 15 + ((ADM-200)/17), where ADM is the number of students in average daily membership in grades kindergarten through 6;

(2) instructional units for secondary students are determined by the formula:

units = 18 + ((ADM-200)/13), where ADM is the number of students in average daily membership in grades 7 through 12.

(c) Kindergarten students who attend school less than four hours a day are counted as 0.5 ADM under (a) and (b) of this section.

(d) District correspondence or other students who do not regularly attend school on a daily basis are counted in the appropriate grade level of the funding community with the highest ADM in the district. (§ 4 ch 238 SLA 1970; am § 1 ch 137 SLA 1972; am § 4 ch 81 SLA 1975; am § 7 ch 90 SLA 1977; am § 2 ch 115 SLA 1978; am §§ 9 — 11, 20 ch 26 SLA 1980; am § 1 ch 119 SLA 1981; § 26 ch 59 SLA 1982; am § 6 ch 75 SLA 1986; am § 6 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Effect of amendments. — The 1986 amendment rewrote this section. The 1987 amendment rewrote this section.

Sec. 14.17.043. Vocational education instructional units. Vocational education instructional units for vocational education courses approved by the department are calculated as the sum, for all of those courses in the funding community, of the products obtained by multiplying 0.05 by the ADM full-time equivalent of the course, and then by the cost weighting factor for the course determined under department regulations. A funding community in which a vocational education course approved by the department is operated receives a minimum of 0.10 instructional units for vocational education, or each district in which a vocational education course is operated receives a minimum of 1.00 instruction units, whichever is greater. (§ 7 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Sec. 14.17.045. Special education instructional units. (a) An exceptional child, as defined in AS 14.30.350, who is enrolled in a special education program, approved by the department, on the last day of the county period for which a determination is being made, generates 0.025 instructional units if the child receives gifted services, 0.056 instructional units if the child receives resource services, 0.1 instructional units if the child receives self-contained services, or 0.333 instructional units if the child receives intensive or hospital/homebound services, as those categories of service are defined by the department by regulation, in the funding community in which the child is served. A child may be counted in one special education category only.

(b) Notwithstanding (a) of this section, in a district that offers a special education program each funding community receives a minimum of 0.25 instructional units for special education for each funding community in which a child is served or the district receives a minimum of 1.00 instructional units for special education, whichever is greater. (§ 7 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Sec. 14.17.047. Bilingual education instructional units. A student for whom an appropriate bilingual program must be provided under regulations adopted by the department, and who is enrolled in a bilingual program, approved by the department, as of the last day of the counting period for which a determination is being made, generates, in the funding community in which the student is served, the number of bilingual education instructional units that is the product obtained by multiplying 0.042 by the student's language dominance category weight under department regulations. A funding community in which a bilingual program approved by the department is operated receives a minimum of 0.10 instructional units for bilingual education, or a district in which a bilingual program is operated receives a minimum of 1.00 instructional units, whichever is greater. (§ 7 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Sec. 14.17.050. Teachers' salary allotment. [Repealed, § 1 ch 238 SLA 1970.]

Sec. 14.17.051. Area cost differential. The area cost differential for a school district is as follows:

School District	Area Cost Differential
Adak	1.27
Alaska Gateway	1.19
Aleutian Region	1.31
Anchorage	1.00
Annette Island	1.03
Bering Strait	1.39
Bristol Bay	1.27
Chatham	1.03
Chugach	1.14
Copper River	1.14
Cordova	1.11
Craig	1.03
Delta/Greely	1.16
Dillingham	1.27
Fairbanks	1.04
Galena	1.30
Haines	1.05
Hoonah	1.08
Hydaburg	1.03
Iditarod	1.33
Juneau	1.00
Kake	1.03
Kashunamiut	1.33
Kenai	1.00
Ketchikan	1.00
King Cove	1.27
Klawock	1.03
Kodiak	1.09
Kuspuk	1.33
Lake & Peninsula	1.31
Lower Kuskokwim	1.42
Lower Yukon	1.35
Matanuska-Susitna	1.00
Nenana	1.20
Nome	1.34
North Slope	1.45
Northwest Arctic	1.45
Pelican	1.08
Petersburg	1.00

Pribilof	1.30
Railbelt	1.23
Sand Point	1.27
Sitka	1.00
Skagway	1.05
Southeast Island	1.04
Southwest Region	1.31
St. Mary's	1.30
Tanana	1.30
Unalaska	1.27
Valdez	1.11
Wrangell	1.00
Yakutat	1.08
Yukon Flats	1.46
Yukon-Koyukuk	1.34
Yupiit	1.41

(§ 4 ch 238 SLA 1970; am § 1 ch 40 SLA 1971; am § 5 ch 81 SLA 1975; am § 12 ch 124 SLA 1975; am § 8 ch 90 SLA 1977; am §§ 3 — 6 ch 115 SLA 1978; am § 12 ch 26 SLA 1980; am § 6 ch 119 SLA 1981; am § 7 ch 75 SLA 1986; am § 8 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Effect of amendments. — The 1986 amendment rewrote this section. The 1987 amendment rewrote this section.

Sec. 14.17.056. Instructional unit value. The instructional unit value is $60,000. (§ 4 ch 238 SLA 1970; am § 1 ch 88 SLA 1973; am § 1 ch 140 SLA 1974; am § 6 ch 81 SLA 1975; am § 3 ch 173 SLA 1976; am § 10 ch 90 SLA 1977; am § 7 ch 115 SLA 1978; am §§ 13, 14 ch 26 SLA 1980; am § 5 ch 119 SLA 1981; am § 28 ch 59 SLA 1982; am § 8 ch 75 SLA 1986; am § 9 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Effect of amendments. — The 1987 amendment deleted "Base" at the beginning of the catchline, deleted "base" preceding "instructional" and substituted "value is $60,000" for "for fiscal years beginning on or after July 1, 1986, is $42,184."

Sec. 14.17.060. Average daily membership allotment. [Repealed, § 1 ch 238 SLA 1970.]

Sec. 14.17.061. Supplemental programs. [Repealed, § 25 ch 91 SLA 1987.]

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Sec. 14.17.070. Attendance center allotment. [Repealed, § 1 ch 238 SLA 1970.]

Sec. 14.17.071. Required local effort. [Repealed, § 21 ch 26 SLA 1980.]

Sec. 14.17.075. Supplemental allocation. [Repealed, § 1 ch 238 SLA 1970.]

Article 2. Preparation of Public School Foundation Budget.

Section
80. Student count estimates
82. Fund balance in school operating fund
139. New school districts
Section
140. Determination of full and true value by Department of Community and Regional Affairs

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Collateral references. — 68 Am. Jur. 2d Schools, §§ 91-108.
78 C.J.S. Schools and School Districts, §§ 83, 90; 79 C.J.S. Schools and School Districts, §§ 325-331.

Sec. 14.17.080. Student count estimates. Each district shall prepare and submit to the department, by October 15 of each fiscal year, in the manner and on forms prescribed by the department, an estimate of its average daily membership and other student count data for the succeeding fiscal year, upon which computations can be made of the amount of estimated state foundation aid for which the district will be eligible under AS 14.17.021 in that fiscal year. In making this estimate, the district shall consider its average daily membership, other student count data, the pattern of growth or decline in preceding years, and other pertinent information available to the district. The preliminary reports required by this section are the basis for estimating the need for state foundation aid for the next fiscal year. (§ 2.01 ch 164 SLA 1962; am § 5 ch 238 SLA 1970; am § 49 ch 6 SLA 1984; am § 9 ch 75 SLA 1986; am § 10 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Effect of amendments. — The 1986 amendment rewrote this section. The 1987 amendment rewrote this section.

Sec. 14.17.081. Minimum expenditure for instruction. [Repealed, § 15 ch 75 SLA 1986.]

Sec. 14.17.082. Fund balance in school operating fund. (a) A district may not accumulate in a fiscal year an unreserved portion of its year-end fund balance in its school operating fund, as defined by department regulations, that is greater than 10 percent of its expenditures for that fiscal year.

(b) The department shall review the annual audit of each district for the preceding fiscal year to ascertain its year-end operating fund balance. The amount by which the unreserved portion of that balance exceeds the amount permitted in (a) of this section shall be deducted from the state foundation aid that would otherwise be paid to the district in the current fiscal year. (§ 15 ch 26 SLA 1980; am § 11 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Effect of amendments. — The 1987 amendment rewrote this section.

Sec. 14.17.090. Estimated average daily membership. [Repealed, § 25 ch 91 SLA 1987.]

Secs. 14.17.100 — 14.17.120. Computation of teachers' salary allotment, average daily membership allotment, and attendance center allotment. [Repealed, § 2 ch 238 SLA 1970.]

Sec. 14.17.130. Computation of required local effort. [Repealed, § 11 ch 95 SLA 1969.]

Sec. 14.17.139. New school districts. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a new school district may not be formed if the total number of pupils for the proposed school district is less than 250 unless the commissioner of education determines that formation of a new school district with less than 250 pupils would be in the best interest of the state and the proposed school district. (§ 10 ch 75 SLA 1986)

Sec. 14.17.140. Determination of full and true value by Department of Community and Regional Affairs. (a) To determine the amount of local effort under AS 14.17.025 and to aid the department and the legislature in planning, the Department of Community and Regional Affairs, in consultation with the assessor for each district, shall determine the full value of the taxable real and personal property in each city or borough district. If there is no local assessor or current local assessment for a district, then the Department of Community and Regional Affairs shall make the determination of full value from information available. In making the determination, the Department of Community and Regional Affairs shall be guided by AS 29.45.110. The determination of full value shall be made by October 1 and sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, on or before

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that date to the president of the school board in each district. Duplicate copies shall be sent to the commissioner. The governing body of a borough or city that is a school district may obtain judicial review of the determination. The superior court may modify the determination of the Department of Community and Regional Affairs only upon a finding of abuse of discretion or upon a finding that there is no substantial evidence to support the determination.

(b) Motor vehicles subject to the motor vehicle registration tax under AS 28.10.431 shall be treated as taxable property under this section. (§ 2.07 ch 164 SLA 1962; am § 2 ch 95 SLA 1969; am § 6 ch 238 SLA 1970; am § 9 ch 200 SLA 1972; am § 1 ch 218 SLA 1976; am § 2 ch 256 SLA 1976; am § 14 ch 147 SLA 1978; am § 12 ch 94 SLA 1980; am § 50 ch 6 SLA 1984; am § 31 ch 74 SLA 1985; am § 11 ch 75 SLA 1986; am § 22 ch 14 SLA 1987; am § 12 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Effect of amendments. — The 1984 amendment, in subsection (a), deleted "To determine the equalized percentage to be applied to basic need under AS 14.17.021, and the matching ratio for required local effort under AS 14.17.071" at the beginning of the first sentence and changed the internal reference in the second sentence.

The 1985 amendment in subsection (a) substituted "AS 29.45.110" for "AS 29.53.060" at the end of the third sentence and "municipality that" for "borough or city which" in the next-to-last sentence.

The 1986 amendment rewrote this section.

The 1987 amendment, in subsection (a), in the first sentence substituted "amount of local effort under AS 14.17.025 and to aid the department and the legislature in planning" for "equalized percentage to be applied to basic need under AS 14.17.021" and inserted "city or borough," deleted the former second sentence, which read: "Exemptions granted under ch. 129, SLA 1957, known as the Alaska Industrial Incentive Act (AS 43.25), shall be honored," in the fourth sentence substituted "by" for "before" and inserted "on or," in the sixth sentence substituted "a borough or city that is a school" for "the borough or city which is the," and in the last sentence substituted "of" for "or" following "abuse", and in subsection (b) substituted "AS 28.10.431" for "AS 28.10.255" and "under" for "for purposes of (a) of."

Sec. 14.17.150. Duty of commissioner to examine and tabulate computations. [Repealed, § 25 ch 91 SLA 1987.]

Article 3. Procedure for Payment of Public School Foundation Funds to Districts.

Section

160. Student counting periods
170. Distribution of state foundation aid
190. Restrictions governing receipt and expenditure of money from public school foundation account

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Collateral references. — 79 C.J.S. Schools and School Districts, §§ 423-427.

Right of school district to maintain action based on misapportionment of school money. 105 ALR 1273.

Determination of school attendance, enrollment, or pupil population for purpose of apportionment of funds. 80 ALR2d 953.

Sec. 14.17.160. Student counting periods. (a) Within two weeks after the end of the 20-school-day period ending the fourth Friday in October, each district shall transmit a report to the department that, under regulations adopted by the department, reports its average daily membership for that counting period, and other student count information that will aid the department in making a determination of its state foundation aid. If it makes the district eligible for more state foundation aid, a district may transmit, within two weeks after the 20-school-day period ending the second Friday in February, a similar report for that counting period. For centralized correspondence study, the October report shall be based on the period from July 1 through the fourth Friday in October, except that summer school students shall be counted as a proportionate fraction as determined by the department. The department may make necessary corrections in the report submitted, and shall notify the district of changes made. The commissioner shall notify the governor of additional appropriations the commissioner estimates to be necessary to fully fund the public school foundation program for the current fiscal year.

(b) Upon written request and for good cause shown, the commissioner may permit a district to use a 20-school-day county period other than the periods set out in (a) of this section. However, the counting period must be 20 consecutive school days. (§ 3.01 ch 164 SLA 1962; am § 3 ch 95 SLA 1969; am § 8 ch 238 SLA 1970; am § 13 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Effect of amendments. — The 1987 amendment rewrote this section.

Sec. 14.17.170. Distribution of state foundation aid. (a) The department shall determine the state foundation aid for each school district in a fiscal year on the basis of the district's data reported under AS 14.17.160 for the counting period that makes the district eligible for the greatest number of instructional units. On or before the 15th day of each of the first nine months of each fiscal year, $^1/_{12}$ of each district's state foundation aid shall be distributed on the basis of the data reported for the preceding fiscal year. On or before the 15th day of each of the last three months of each fiscal year, $^1/_3$ of the balance of each district's state foundation aid shall be distributed, after the balance has been recomputed on the basis of student count and other data reported for the current fiscal year.

(b) If a district receives more state aid money than it is entitled to receive under this chapter, it shall immediately remit the amount of overpayment to the commissioner, to be returned to the public school foundation account. Upon an adequate showing of a cash flow shortfall, and in the discretion of the commissioner, the department may

make advance payments to a school district. The total of advance payments may not exceed the amount of state foundation aid for which the district is eligible for the fiscal year. (§ 3.02 ch 164 SLA 1962; am § 1 ch 169 SLA 1968; am § 4 ch 95 SLA 1969; am § 9 ch 238 SLA 1970; am § 1 ch 135 SLA 1975; am § 12 ch 75 SLA 1986; am § 14 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Effect of amendments. — The 1986 amendment rewrote this section. The 1987 amendment rewrote this section.

Sec. 14.17.180. Payment under final computation. [Repealed, § 25 ch 91 SLA 1987.]

Sec. 14.17.190. Restrictions governing receipt and expenditure of money from public school foundation account. (a) The public school foundation money distributed to a district during a year shall be received, held, and expended by the district subject to the provisions of law and regulations adopted by the department.

(b) Each district shall maintain complete financial records of the receipt and disbursement of public school foundation money, money acquired from local effort, and other money received by the district. The records must be in the form required by the department and are subject to audit by the department at any time. (§ 3.04 ch 164 SLA 1962; am § 5 ch 98 SLA 1966; am § 6 ch 95 SLA 1969; am § 15 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Effect of amendments. — The 1987 amendment, in subsection (b), in the first sentence inserted "complete," substituted a comma for "and" preceding "money acquired," and added "and other money received by the district," and in the last sentence substituted "department" for "commissioner" in the first instance and "department" for "commissioner or the board" in the second instance.

NOTES TO DECISIONS

Administrative hearing deadline. — The Department of Education's regulation providing for a 30-day deadline for an administrative hearing on a final action of the department, 4 AAC 40.040, is merely directory; the department's substantial compliance with the regulation is sufficient absent significant prejudice to the other party. Cooper River School Dist. v. State, Dep't of Educ., Sup. Ct. Op. No. 2945 (File No. S-488), 702 P.2d 625 (1985).

Article 4. General Provisions.

Section
200. Regulations
210. State aid to newly established district schools
220. Purpose
225. Construction and implementation of chapter
250. Definitions

Collateral references. — Validity of legislative delegation of taxing power to school districts in absence of express constitutional provision authorizing such delegation. 113 ALR 1416.

Extent of area within tax exemption extended to property used for educational, religious, or charitable purposes. 134 ALR 1176.

Tax exemption of educational institutions as extending to athletic fields or property used for social or recreation purposes. 143 ALR 274.

Tax exemption of property of religious, educational, or charitable body as extending to property or income thereof used in publication or sale of literature. 154 ALR 895.

Rescission of vote authorizing school district expenditure or tax. 68 ALR2d 1041.

Exemption of public school property from assessments for local improvements. 15 ALR3d 847.

Garage or parking lot as within tax exemption extended to property of educational, charitable or hospital organizations. 33 ALR3d 938.

Validity of basing public school financing system on local property taxes. 41 ALR3d 1220.

Charitable or educational organization from sales or use taxes. 53 ALR3d 748.

Property of educational body tax exempted extending to property used by personnel as living quarters. 55 ALR3d 485.

Validity, under state constitution and laws, of issuance by state or state agency of revenue bonds to finance or refinance construction projects at private religious-affiliated colleges or universities. 95 ALR3d 1000.

What are educational institutions or schools within state property tax exemption provisions. 34 ALR4th 698.

Sec. 14.17.200. Regulations. The department shall adopt regulations to implement this chapter. (§ 4.01 ch 164 SLA 1962; am § 6 ch 98 SLA 1966)

Sec. 14.17.205. State aid to districts operating approved school food service programs. [Repealed, § 25 ch 91 SLA 1987.]

Sec. 14.17.210. State aid to newly established district schools. (a) A regional educational attendance area school which becomes a city or borough district school is considered a regional educational attendance area school for purposes of financial support until the expiration of a complete fiscal year after the date on which the school becomes a city or borough district school. This subsection does not prevent a local government from spending money to contribute to the financial support of a regional educational attendance area school which becomes a city or borough district school.

(b) For each subsequent fiscal year, the state shall disburse to the city or borough school district only the money to which the district is entitled under the public school foundation program. (§ 5.02 ch 164 SLA 1962; am § 25 ch 53 SLA 1973; am § 13 ch 124 SLA 1975)

Sec. 14.17.215. State aid to districts affected by state activities. [Repealed, § 20 ch 26 SLA 1980.]

Sec. 14.17.220. Purpose. It is the intention of the legislature, in enacting this public school foundation program, to assure an equitable level of educational opportunities for those in attendance in the public schools of the state. Except for the limitations of AS 14.17.025, this chapter may not be interpreted as preventing a public school district from providing educational services and facilities beyond those assured by the foundation program. (§ 1.01 ch 164 SLA 1962; am § 16 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Effect of amendments. — The 1987 amendment substituted "equitable" for "adequate" in the first sentence and "Except for the limitations of AS 14.17.025, this chapter may" for "This chapter shall" at the beginning of the last sentence.

Sec. 14.17.225. Construction and implementation of chapter. (a) This chapter does not create a debt of the state. Each district shall establish, maintain, and operate under a balanced budget. The state is not responsible for the debts of a school district.

(b) Money to carry out the provisions of AS 14.17.010 — 14.17.190 may be appropriated annually by the legislature into the public school foundation account. If amounts in the account are insufficient to meet the allocations authorized under AS 14.17.010 — 14.17.190 for a fiscal year, each district's basic need shall be reduced pro rata as necessary to make the funds available sufficient to meet the allocations for that fiscal year. (§ 8 ch 95 SLA 1969; am § 1 ch 79 SLA 1971; am § 12 ch 90 SLA 1977; am § 51 ch 6 SLA 1984; am § 17 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Effect of amendments. — The 1984 amendment repealed former subsection (d), relating to the average daily membership allotment supplemental account. The 1987 amendment rewrote this section.

Secs. 14.17.230 — 14.17.240. Transition; repealer. [Repealed, § 2 ch 71 SLA 1972.]

Sec. 14.17.250. Definitions. In this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires

(1) "ADM full-time equivalent" means the aggregate class periods of pupil membership in specified classes for the student counting period for which a determination is being made, divided by the total number of all class periods in the student counting period;

(2) "average daily membership" or "ADM" means the aggregate days of membership of pupils divided by the actual number of days in session for the counting period for which a determination is being made;

(3) "commissioner" means the commissioner of the Department of Education;

(4) "district" means any city or borough school district or regional educational attendance area;

(5) "eligible federal impact aid" for a fiscal year means the amount of federal aid received by the district as of March 1 of the fiscal year as payment for its entitlement for the application submitted during the preceding fiscal year, including advance payments, and adjustments received since March 1 of the preceding fiscal year from prior year applications, under secs. 2, 3, and 4 of P.L. 81 — 874 (20 U.S.C. 237 — 239), as amended, except payments received under sec. 3(d)(3)(B)(ii) of that Act (20 U.S.C. 238(d)(3)(B)(ii)), to the extent the state may consider that aid as local resources under that Act and the regulations adopted under it;

(6) "fiscal year" means the year beginning July 1 and ending June 30 for which allotments and entitlements are computed or distributed;

(7) "local contributions" means appropriations to the school operating fund by the city or borough, interest earnings that a district is allowed to keep and spend on school operations, state tuition payments, the value of in-kind services performed by the city or borough, and 10 percent of the district's eligible federal impact aid.

(8) "pre-fiscal year" means the year immediately before the fiscal year;

(9) "public school foundation account" means the account created by AS 14.17.010 for use in financing education in public elementary and secondary schools;

(10) "taxable real and personal property" means all real and personal property taxable under the laws of the state. (§ 4.02 ch 164 SLA 1962; am §§ 7, 8 ch 98 SLA 1966; am § 3 ch 153 SLA 1966; am § 18 ch 69 SLA 1970; am §§ 3, 11 ch 238 SLA 1970; am § 2 ch 40 SLA 1971; am § 14 ch 124 SLA 1975; am § 8 ch 115 SLA 1978; am §§ 17, 18 ch 26 SLA 1980; am §§ 13, 14 ch 75 SLA 1986; am §§ 18 — 21, 25 ch 91 SLA 1987)

Revisor's notes. — Reorganized in 1986 and 1987 to alphabetize the defined terms.

Effect of amendments. — The 1986 amendment rewrote former paragraphs (5) and (10), which defined "elementary school" and "secondary school".

The 1987 amendment rewrote paragraph (1); in paragraph (2), inserted "or ADM" and substituted "counting period for which a determination is being made" for "school term", deleted "but does not include household goods and personal effects" at the end of paragraph (10), added paragraphs (5) and (7), and repealed the paragraphs defining "elementary school," "instructional unit," "secondary school," and "weighted ADM."

APPENDIX E

ALASKA TAXABLE

CHAPTER 1

THE ALASKA PROPERTY TAX, 1989

CHAPTER 1

THE ALASKA PROPERTY TAX

The Power to Tax

The power to tax is an essential power of state sovereignty, not depending on a grant of authority from its constitution. However, constitutional provisions define and restrict a state's power to tax. Three important restrictions set out in the Alaska State Constitution are:

- "No tax shall be levied .... except for a public purpose."
  (Article IX, Section 6)

- "Standards for appraisal of all property assessed by the State or its political subdivisions shall be prescribed by law."
  (Article IX, Section 3)

- "The State may delegate taxing powers to organized boroughs and cities only."
  (Article X, Section 2)

Unlike the state, boroughs and cities don't have inherent powers of taxation, though some power was granted by the State Constitution and statutes. The power of taxation is extraordinary; administration can't be left to implication or inference. For that reason, Alaska Statutes and some Attorney General's opinions and court decisions, define the authority of municipalities in assessing, levying, and collecting property taxes.

Uniform Measures

"Taxes are said to be 'equal and uniform' when no person or class of persons in the taxing district, whether it be state, county, or city, is taxed at a different rate than are other persons in the same thing, and where the objects of taxation are the same, by whomsoever owned or whatsoever they may be." (Weatherly Independent School Dist. V. Hughes, Tex Civ. App. 41 S.W. 2nd 445, 447.)

The first step in establishing uniform assessment procedures in Alaska was taken in 1961-62 when the Legislature passed House Concurrent Resolution No. 14 (HCR 14). This resolution required the Local Affairs Agency (now the Division of Municipal & Regional Assistance in the Department of Community & Regional Affairs) to prepare:

- a study of assessment problems and procedures in Alaska,
- a manual for assessors, and
- a report recommending legislation "to assure a uniform, equalized, and realistic assessment of property throughout the state."

The resolution also authorized the Agency to inspect records of equalization, hire an assessor, and hold hearings to prepare the study, manual, and report.

The Local Affairs Agency and the Alaska Association of Assessing Officers published the manual for assessors in 1963 and updated it in 1967. It's no longer used except as historical reference. There are no plans to update the manual as there is no need for it anymore.

Several reports and studies have since been done by the local government agency; the most recent was "An Examination of Property Tax Exemptions," in 1980.

In 1962, the Legislature also adopted AS 14.17.140 stating the Department of Community and Regional Affairs, in consultation with the assessor for each district, shall determine the full and true value of the taxable real and personal property in each district."

Table 4 shows the full and true value estimate of taxable property and is used as the standard measure of community wealth for many state programs.

Definition of Full and True Value

Full and true value is "...the estimated price which the property would bring in an open market and under the then prevailing market conditions in a sale between a willing seller and a willing buyer, both conversant with the property and with prevailing general price levels." (AS 29.45.110) Full and true value determinations are made annually according to standards in Attorney General Opinion No.18, 1962.

The Full Value Determination

Local control is a basic assumption in Alaska's local government structure. As a result, municipalities have a unique amount of flexibility in property tax administration. Numerous optional exemptions may be adopted (AS 29.45.050). In addition, municipalities reassess property values at different times, ranging from every year to every four or five years.

Because local systems vary widely, a common unit to measure local values is needed. The full value determination prepared by the Department of Community and Regional Affairs is that measure.

Sales studies, described in Chapter 2, and local assessors help the State assessor adjust locally generated values to offset for optional exemptions and varying reassessment cycles.

Program Uses

The major uses of full and true value estimates are:

- The State revenue sharing program's formula to compute a municipality's State revenue sharing entitlement is based on relative wealth and locally generated revenues,
- The public school foundation's funding formula uses full value determination as one component,
- The local match portion of cultural facilities grants partially uses the full value determination,
- Some grants for senior citizen programs use the full value determination, and
- The bonding ability for local public facilities is affected by full value determination.

Property Tax Limitations

There are four statutory tax limitations in Alaska applying in varying degrees and circumstances. The limitations apply only to taxes for operating costs of local government; there's no limit on taxation to pay bonded indebtedness.

1. Second Class Cities can't levy property taxes exceeding one half of one percent (.5%) of the assessed value of property in the municipality in any one year. (AS 29.45.590)

2. No municipality can levy taxes exceeding three percent (3%) of the assessed value of property in the municipality in any one year. (AS 29.45.090)

3. No municipality, or combination of municipalities occupying the same geographic area, may levy taxes exceeding $1500 per resident in a year. * (AS 29.45.090)

4. No municipality, or combination of municipalities occupying the same geographic area, may levy taxes on the value of property exceeding the product of 225% of the average per capita full and true value of property in the state multiplied by the number of residents of the taxing municipality. (AS 29.45.090)

Errors In Municipal Assessment, Valuation, or Taxation Records

Alaska Statutes, 29.45.103-105, were amended to provide review of municipal assessments, valuation, or taxation records and provide notice of major errors. The State assessor's office, using AS 29.45.103-105 and 19 AAC 39, investigates errors and notifies the municipality. The municipality corrects the error or appeals the assessor's determination.

APPENDIX F

ALASKA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
EDUCATION FOUNDATION FUNDING FORMULA PROPOSAL

ALASKA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
326 Fourth Street • Suite 408 • Juneau, Alaska 99801-1101 • (907) 586-9702 • FAX (907) 586-5879

AASA FUNDING PROPOSAL

The Alaska Association of School Administrators' strongly supports the following changes in the Education Foundation Formula to address the needs of all Alaskan School Districts.

1) We recommend increasing the instructional unit value from $60,000 to $63,000.

2) We recommend the following formula change to address small school site funding.

Change the schedule in AS 14. 17. 041 to:

a)

ADM	Units
1 - 10	2
11 - 20	2 + (ADM - 10) /5
21 - 60	4 + (ADM - 20) /8
61 - 240	9 + (ADM - 60) /12
241 - 525	24 + (ADM - 240) /14

b) Elementary: units = 16 + (ADM - 200) /17
Secondary: units = 19 + (ADM - 200) /13

The changes above affect all school districts with over 120 in ADM in a given funding community.

3. We recommend House Bill 185 (attached) to resolve the single dual site issue.

Introduced: 2/17/89
Referred: Health, Education & Social Services and Finance

6-0789A

IN THE HOUSE BY WALLIS AND JACKO

HOUSE BILL NO. 185

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

A BILL

For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to state aid for education; and providing for an effective date."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

Section 1. AS 14.17.041 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

(e) A district with an ADM of 3,000 or less that consists of one funding community shall increase the elementary and secondary instructional units received under (a) or (b) of this section by multiplying the instructional units by a percentage determined under the following table:

District ADM	Percentage
1 - 250	1.12
251 - 525	1.08
526 - 1000	1.06
1001 - 2000	1.04
2001 - 3000	1.03

(f) A district with an ADM of 1,000 or less that consists of two funding communities shall increase the elementary and secondary instructional units received under (a) or (b) of this section by multiplying the instructional units by a percentage determined under the following table:

District ADM	Percentage
1 - 250	1.08
251 - 525	1.04
526 - 1000	1.02

4. We recommend the following formula change to assist those districts who will be adversely impacted by rising property values.

HOLD HARMLESS

1) Amend Sec. 14.17. 025(a) (1) to read:

(1) The equivalent of a four (six) mill tax levy on the full and true value of the taxable real and personal property in the district as of January 1, 1990 or as of January 1 of the second preceding fiscal year if lower than January 1, 1990, as determined by the Department of community and Regional Affairs under AS 29. 45. 110 and AS 14. 17. 140; or

5. We recommend a supplemental appropriation for full entitlement of foundation funds due to increased FY-91 enrollment, and the reinstatement of all funds vetoed by Governor Cowper in the FY-91 budget.

GENERAL RATIONALE

- Unified effort
- Enhances equity
- Benefits all districts
- Benefits all students
- Addresses immediate needs
- First step toward improved formula
- Addresses increased costs of:

  Employee benefit programs
  State & federal compliance requirements
  Maintenance and operation
  Mandated programs

APPENDIX G

EDUCATION LEGISLATION

(A REVIEW FROM THE STATES) "REFORM AND ACCOUNTABILITY and EDUCATION FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE"

Education Legislation (Note)

Education reform and finance have been among the most prominent issues facing states in recent years. A variety of factors—declining student academic performance; increasing competition in the international economy, as well as the American job market; the quest for economic development; and decreasing federal activity in education — have spurred officials to take significant strides toward improving their states' primary and secondary public education systems. In doing so, they have not merely sought to enhance conventional modes of education and funding sources; they have attempted to restructure school systems and employ innovative teaching and administrative techniques.

During the past year, the Committee on Suggested State Legislation reviewed several pieces of state legislation dealing with education reform and funding. In lieu of offering a single item, however, the Committee chose to give policymakers an overview of some of the actions states have taken in response to these issues.

The following review of state legislative action in education is divided into two sections: **Education Reform and Accountability** and **Education Finance and Governance.** The reader will note, however, that several states have undertaken comprehensive reform initiatives that will be discussed in both sections. **Kentucky, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma** and **South Carolina**, for example, enacted particularly extensive and detailed education reform measures during the past two years and will be prominently featured throughout.

Education Reform and Accountability

Curriculum

Several states have changed their public school curricula, including what children are taught and how they are taught. The **Kentucky** Education Reform Act of 1990 (HB 940), for example, establishes seven areas of knowledge that public education will help students develop, including communication skills, understanding of governmental processes, understanding of mental and physical wellness, and skills to help students become competitive in the job market. It also creates a council for education technology which will develop a five-year plan for putting advanced technology, including computers, into the classroom.

However, the act's most striking innovation is the elimination of kindergarten and the first, second and third grades, and the merger of these classes into a single grade level called the primary school program (to be in place by the 1992-93 school year). Children will remain in this program until they are determined to be ready for the fourth grade. The change is designed to help remove the stigma of failure for children who do not advance in early grades, as well as prevent promotion for students who are not ready to move to higher grades. Currently, about 10 percent of the state's school children fail in the first grade.

Ohio's Education Accountability and School Reform Act of 1989 (SB

140) authorizes the state's board of education to formulate and prescribe minimum standards requiring the use of phonics in reading classes for kindergarten, as well as grades one, two and three. In addition, the state board is to provide in-service training for teachers concerning the use of phonics as a technique in the teaching of reading at these levels. The act also authorizes the board to adopt an approved list of standardized tests for district boards of education to use in assessing students in four grade levels — grades four, six, eight and 10.

Each local board of education in **Ohio** is required to implement a competency-based education program for composition, mathematics and reading in grades one through 12. Such programs will feature pupil performance objectives for each grade level, curricula and instruction methods designed to achieve these objectives, assessment of student performance through written standardized tests, and services for students who are not making satisfactory progress. The state board is required to develop a model competency-based program for local school districts to emulate. Also, the state board must prepare a plan accelerating the modernization of the vocational education curriculum to give students a better background in science, English, mathematics and technological skills to help them compete in the workforce of the future. Finally, the act establishes a mandatory kindergarten program.

South Carolina's 1989 school reform act, known as "Target 2000" (R 295, S 321), is unique in that it emphasizes "higher order thinking skills." Higher order thinking and problem solving skills involve pupil synthesis, analysis, evaluation and utilization of information, instead of sole reliance on more traditional modes of education consisting of memorization and recitation with little emphasis on reading and writing. Higher order thinking and problem solving skills can make the application and importance of basic skills clearer to students. Techniques for teaching these skills might include pupil discussions and essay writing about problems or issues.

The **South Carolina** act requires the state's board of education to establish a committee made up of personnel from the state department of education, school districts and institutions of higher education to assist the board in identifying the characteristics of higher order thinking and problem solving. By 1991-92, students pursuing teacher preparation or education administration degrees at the state's colleges and universities will be required to complete training for teacher higher order thinking skills. By the 1993-94 school year, the state board of education must develop an observational instrument to be used by local school districts in evaluating new teachers. Colleges and universities also are required to develop evaluation instruments to be used by the institutions in evaluating all student teachers.

The state's board of education also will select textbooks and standardized tests promoting higher order thinking and problem solving skills, and design in-service training programs for teachers and school staff to help them learn about instruction in these skills as part of the existing curriculum.

Indiana's Education Reform Act of 1990 (HB 1290) provides for a

pilot program to examine innovative testing methods (including techniques for measuring higher order thinking skills), as well as expanded use of writing samples. The act establishes the Education Technology Program to provide and extend educational technologies to elementary and secondary schools. This may include computers in the homes of students; technology laboratories for instruction in reading, writing and mathematics; and use of laboratories for remedial work. It also establishes the Twenty-first Century Schools Pilot Program, which will create pilot programs in several areas, including school-based management models, parent involvement strategies, innovative curricula, nonstandard courses or textbook selections, and teacher and school administrator training.

Oklahoma's 1990 Common Education Reform Act (HB 1017) establishes a 22-member Curriculum Committee, which will remain in existence until July 1, 1992. The committee is required to determine and prescribe desired levels of competencies of public school students, as well as the core curriculum needed to support effective instruction of these competencies. The committee also must provide for a career exploration program for students in grades six through 10.

The **Oklahoma** state board of education must adopt a new core curriculum by February 1, 1991 for implementation by the 1993-94 school year. The curriculum will be designed to attain desired levels of competency in a variety of areas, including language, social sciences and communication, as well as math, science, literature and the arts. All students must attain literacy through the core curriculum. The state board is required to provide an option for graduation based on attainment of specified levels of competency in each core curriculum area. The act also gives school districts the option of establishing an extended school year consisting of 11 or 12 months in which school is offered in excess of 200 days with at least six hours of instruction per day.

A number of states are experimenting with innovative testing methods, often called "performance-based testing," as alternatives to standardized tests. **California** has begun using open-ended problems as part of its mathematics test for 12th graders. **Connecticut** is introducing new testing methods for science and mathematics problems. **New York** requires all fourth graders to conduct science experiments and write reports on the results. Under **Kentucky**'s reform act, performance-based testing will be implemented in all grades by 1995. Approximately 30 states now include essay writing in their testing programs.

Dropout Prevention and At-Risk Students

South Carolina's Target 2000 program requires all school districts to write and implement plans for dropout prevention and retrieval over the next three years. State funds will be allocated to dropout prevention programs which target students below the 10th grade.

In 1990, as part of its education reform act (HB 1523), **Mississippi** enacted a program to reduce the state's high school dropout rate. The plan includes a data collection system to determine why students drop

out of school and assess the dropout rate for each school district; a public awareness program to publicize dropout data, consisting of public service announcements and a media campaign; and the development of programs such as teacher support teams for at-risk students, family involvement plans, and coordinated efforts to prevent drug abuse and teen pregnancy.

Indiana legislation enacted in 1990 (HR 1290) authorizes mentoring programs for at-risk students. The act also requires schools to conduct orientation sessions for parents of students participating in at-risk programs, and requires the state department of education to establish at least 10 measures to be used by schools to determine the effectiveness of their at-risk programs. **Kentucky, Mississippi** and **West Virginia** also joined the growing list of states denying drivers' licenses to students who drop out of school.

Early Childhood Education

Early intervention through early childhood education and child care programs has become a vital part of the effort in many states to improve education. **Kentucky**'s education reform act initiates half-day preschool programs for under-privileged four-year-olds in each school district beginning in 1990-91, while districts with facilities deemed inadequate will be permitted to delay the initiation of the program until the 1992-93 school year.

Arkansas has established an Early Childhood Commission (SB 71, Act 202), a 17-member body to administer a loan trust fund for child care facilities and the promotion of early childhood programs throughout the state. **Indiana** legislation (HB 1290) requires schools to develop child care programs for children attending kindergarten through grade six, as well as establishes a pilot program encouraging schools and communities to develop early childhood, preschool and latch-key children's programs. **Mississippi** has authorized school districts to use school facilities to provide child care services for pre-kindergarten-aged children, and to use school facilities to provide before and after school child care services for school-age children.

Oklahoma's new education reform act includes revising the compulsory school age-range requirement from seven to under 18 to five to 18, and beginning in 1990-91, it requires all four-year-old children to attend an early childhood program if they have not attended a public school kindergarten. The act also establishes full-day (six hour) kindergarten classes to be implemented by the 1993-94 school year. **New Mexico** has created an office of child development (HB 32, Chapter 290) to promulgate licensing requirements for people working with children under eight years of age in schools and other child care settings. **South Carolina**'s 1989 school reform act requires school districts to provide at least one half-day of early childhood development programs for four-year-old children who demonstrate educational readiness deficiencies.

Open Enrollment

Open enrollment or "school choice" plans have become a much-discussed proposal for improving public schools in many states. Such plans allow students to attend high school outside of the district in which they reside. Most include restrictions concerning class space and desegregation laws, as well as funding student travel. At least four states enacted school choice plans during 1989, and at least 20 states have some type of school choice program.

In 1987, **Minnesota** became one of the first states to enact an open enrollment program. The act (Minn. Stat. 123.3515) allows students to enroll in schools in participating districts other than the one in which the students live. Nonresident districts must adopt criteria for admission and may refuse admission because of a lack of space. A school with a desegregation plan may restrict the number of students who transfer in or out of the district.

Nebraska is permitting a one-time choice of schools with the enactment of its open enrollment legislation in 1989 (LB 183, Chapter 79). After the plan is implemented, students will have one school year to determine whether they should return to their district of residence or remain in another district until graduation. The plan has a four-year implementation schedule: in 1990-91, open enrollment implementation will be optional for all districts; in 1991-92, resident districts must allow 5 percent of students to opt out; in 1992-93, resident districts must allow 10 percent of students to opt out; in 1993-94, there must be full open enrollment with receiving and resident districts participating.

Ohio's 1989 Education Accountability and School Reform Act requires each school district to develop an open enrollment policy by July 1993. Districts choosing to implement their policy at an earlier date will have their implementation plan evaluated by the state board of education. The legislation includes guidelines for district plans, including preventing districts from granting admittance on a student's abilities, such as athletic talent, or denying admittance because of a handicap.

At least 20 states, including **Arkansas, Hawaii, Iowa** and **New Jersey**, have adopted limited school choice programs. Illinois has established a choice plan for Chicago and **Washington** state has a program designed specifically for dropouts.

Post-Secondary Enrollment Options

In some states, 11th and 12th grade students may enroll in colleges on a full- or part-time basis to do nonsectarian work. Two of those states, **Minnesota** (Minn. Stat. 123.3514) and **Ohio** (SB 140), allow students to apply to any public or private university in the state to gain credit for nonsectarian courses. Students may choose to earn secondary or post-secondary credit. If the student chooses to take a course for post-secondary credit, the institution will require tuition payment from the student. States are to reimburse colleges for tuition fees and materials for courses taken for high school credit.

Social Services and Parental Involvement

Many educational experts believe that if pupils are ill or distracted, their capacity to learn is greatly reduced. Consequently, two states are striving to provide services to youngsters to help make them more receptive in the classroom, even though such services are not part of the traditional role of education.

By 1991, under **Kentucky**'s education reform act (HB 940), social service centers located in or near schools must be established in schools where at least one-fifth of the students qualify for the federal school lunch program. Elementary schools will have "family resource centers" serving parents as well as children, including those not yet in kindergarten. Services will include year-round care for needy children between the ages of two and 12, and health care and literacy programs for the entire family. Expectant parents will receive advice on child care development, and day care providers can receive training at the centers.

Middle schools and high schools will establish "youth service centers" to offer teen-age students a wide range of counseling services concerning drugs, alcohol, family crises, mental health, and job training and placement.

Districts with eligible schools will apply for grant funding from the state's cabinet for human resources, which will oversee the program. School districts may contract with local agencies for the provision of services. Approximately 40 percent of the state's schools are expected to be eligible.

In 1989, under authorization from a 1987 appropriations bill, **New Jersey**'s department of human services established a network of 29 youth centers to counsel teen-agers about drugs, mental health and employment issues. The centers, located in or near secondary schools, also offer recreational activities to help lure dropouts back to school. The state plans to expand the program to some elementary schools. **New Jersey**'s program served as a model for the Kentucky effort.

Some state reform acts include provisions encouraging parental involvement in education. **Ohio**'s education reform act (SB 140) requires the state department of education to promote innovative school-parent relationships which actively involve parents in school decisions, as well as encourage school-business relationships to provide students with work experiences. **South Carolina**'s Target 2000 program features parent education programs for parents with young children. **Indiana**'s new act (HB 1290) features a Twenty-first Century Schools Pilot Program which includes parent involvement strategies.

Teacher Qualifications

Several states face teacher shortages, especially in the areas of science and mathematics. Teachers usually are required to have an education college diploma before teaching, but some states have waived these requirements, allowing professionals from other fields to undertake some teacher training and then enter the classroom. **New Jersey**'s program,

which was established by regulation rather than by statute in the mid-1980s, has helped relieve a shortage of science and mathematics instructors by allowing experienced mathematicians, physicists and experts in other disciplines to teach. State officials reportedly have been pleased with the performance of the 1,500 new teachers hired to date.

In **Kentucky**, candidates for teacher certification may complete a state-approved local district training program as an alternative to college teacher preparation programs (HB 940). Such programs must consist of 250 hours of formal instruction, including a full-time seminar, and a period of classroom supervision with evaluations by members of a professional support team.

In **Mississippi** (HB 1523), after July 1, 1993, preparation to teach grades seven through 12 will require a college degree in a major other than education. The required program of study in preparation for teaching in kindergarten through grade six must involve one, two or three minors, including language arts, reading, social studies, mathematics, foreign language and science. The act also amends teacher recertification requirements to require that teachers successfully complete prescribed in-service training programs, coursework for credit or programs developed to instruct teachers in dropout prevention and nontraditional instructional techniques. Finally, the act allows business or professional persons in each school district to teach a maximum of three periods each day with the approval of the local school district and the submission of a transcript or other record of educational qualification for teaching a particular subject.

In **South Carolina**, the state's commission on higher education, in consultation with the state board of education, must establish a center for the advancement of teaching and school leadership at a selected public college or university (R 295, S 321). The center is to provide a program for school improvement consisting of intensive short-term institutes for teams of teachers and administrators who are committed to creating innovative programs in their schools. The act also makes available training for school administrators with an emphasis on effective instructional leadership at the state department of education's leadership academy, which is provided in cooperation with state universities.

In **Ohio**, the new education reform act requires the state board of education to adopt standards and procedures for granting teaching internship certificates, valid for one year and renewable for one additional year (SB 140). An individual may apply for an initial internship or renewal only if the superintendent of the local school district has offered the applicant a one-year limited contract contingent upon the applicant's successful completion of certain requirements. Applicant requirements include: a bachelor's degree in the subject area for which the certification is being sought; three years' experience deemed essential to effective teaching; passing an examination measuring the applicant's knowledge of reading, writing and mathematics; and a test measuring the applicant's knowledge of the subject for which certification is sought. Applicants also must complete six hours of pre-service coursework in education.

Oklahoma legislation (HB 1017) establishes a procedure for the state board of education to grant alternative program teaching certificates to persons with a baccalaureate degree who wish to teach foreign languages, math or science. It requires the person to indicate an intention to seek full certification for the specialization he or she will teach. Such teachers must have five years of work experience outside of education and file a plan with a director of teacher education to meet all certification requirements for a standard certificate within five years, except for student teaching.

Teacher testing has become an increasingly common method for states to ensure that their teachers have a basic knowledge of the subject areas they teach. Since 1980, the number of states requiring teacher competency testing has increased from 10 to 44.

Accountability

As new educational programs are created, state legislators are developing means to monitor those programs and to hold accountable professionals at the district and school levels. **Kentucky**'s massive education reform bill, which considerably alters the state's educational system, establishes a comprehensive accountability system. The act creates a state monitoring agency, the office of educational accountability, under the direction of the legislative research commission. The office is to investigate allegations of wrongdoing, waste or mismanagement in local school districts, as well as monitor implementation of the new school system.

A council on school performance standards will frame goals in measurable terms and define what is expected of students and schools. By July 1, 1993, the state board for elementary and secondary education must disseminate a model curriculum framework based on the goals, outcomes and assessment strategies developed by the council.

By the 1995-96 school year, the state board will implement a performance-based assessment program to ensure school accountability. Beginning in 1991-92, the board will administer an interim student testing program to assess student skills in reading, mathematics, science and social studies in grades four, eight, and 12. Local school boards are required to publish annual performance reports. The state board must develop a system to determine which schools demonstrate improved student performance and to distribute rewards to them. School staff will determine the general areas in which reward funds will be spent. Schools showing improvement will be required to develop a school improvement plan. A school determined to be a "school in crisis" will have certified staff placed on probation, with students permitted to transfer to a successful school. The act also creates a commonwealth school improvement fund to provide grants to schools in educationally deficient districts to improve instruction or management.

By January 1, 1991, the state board will establish standards for school district performance. Failure of an educationally deficient school district to meet the goals in its improvement plan is grounds for the removal

of its superintendent and local school board members. The state board may select replacements, and elections may resume after the school has met performance standards. Educationally deficient districts must work with the state department of education to develop improvement plans.

The state board will provide professional development programs for certified personnel and establish criteria for designating distinguished educators. The act lists several responsibilities and benefits of distinguished educators, including accepting assignments in schools which need improvements and receiving salary supplements while serving as a distinguished educator.

Other states have undertaken significant efforts in the area of accountability. For example, **North Carolina** enacted legislation in 1989 (SB 2, Ch. 778) which authorizes the state board of education to develop and implement a performance-based educational accountability program. Local school districts which elect to participate must submit a school improvement plan to the state superintendent of public instruction. Such plans must outline student performance goals and the strategy for attaining them. Participating districts will be exempt from certain state requirements.

The act further authorizes the state board of education to adopt procedures and guidelines through which local school administrative units may participate in the program, beginning in the 1990-91 fiscal year. These measures include guidelines for the development of local school improvement plans with three-to-five year student performance goals and a set of student performance indicators for measuring and assessing student performance in participating local school administrative districts. Indicators may include attendance and dropout rates, standardized test scores, parental involvement and post-secondary outcomes.

Oklahoma's school reform act denies state accreditation to schools which do not meet the state's standards for minimum salary, curriculum and class size standards. The state board of education must adopt accreditation standards for public schools by February 1, 1991. The standards will be implemented with the 1993-94 school year, but school districts will not lose or be denied accreditation solely for failure to meet the standards prior to the 1997-98 school year. Also, all schools must reduce their class sizes to no more than 20 for grades one through six by 1993-94 or risk loss of accreditation. Teachers in grades seven through 12 must not be responsible for the instruction of more than 140 pupils per day by 1993-94 or 120 pupils per day by 1997-98, or their schools will risk loss of accreditation. Finally, the act creates an educational oversight board and an office of accountability.

Arkansas' School Report Cards Act of 1989 (SB 293, Act 668) establishes an office of accountability in the department of education. The office of accountability will publish an annual assessment of schools, grouping them according to socio-economic factors. The **Massachusetts** School Takeover Plan (1989 SB 5639, Chapter 133) permitted Boston University to negotiate a takeover agreement with the school committee of the district of Chelsea which suffered from a high dropout rate,

low achievement test scores and the highest teen pregnancy rate in the commonwealth. Under the agreement, the university will assume the district management powers of the school board and oversee the school district for 10 years. The university will be charged with improving curriculum and test scores, decreasing the dropout rate, increasing parental involvement, and other improvements.

Nevada's Accountability Initiative of 1989 (SB 74, Ch. 868) requires county school boards to adopt accountability programs for each district in cooperation with teachers' unions. County school boards must have a method in place for informing residents about school quality and student achievement. **New Mexico**'s District Reports Act of 1989 (Chapter 308) requires school districts to publish annual accountability reports, including information such as budget data, dropout rates and student achievement test scores. The legislation is designed to encourage community involvement.

Ohio's Education Accountability and School Reform Act requires the state board of education to establish indicators of schools and school district performance based on such factors as graduation rates, dropout rates and student academic achievement levels. The state board is required to take action if a school district is not making satisfactory progress toward the elimination of educational deficiencies, such as the assignment of educational experts to such districts to assist in the development of corrective action plans.

Education Finance and Governance

While education reform has been a major concern for state governments over the past decade, the problem of financing those reforms has been particularly troublesome. At the time of publication, for example, there was uncertainty as to how **Mississippi**'s reform package (described in this note) would be financed. In several states, school finance systems have been challenged in court by poor districts claiming that the systems are inequitable. In four states, **Kentucky, Montana, New Jersey** and **Texas**, courts struck down public school financing programs as inequitable, and at the time of publication, education finance lawsuits were pending in 12 states and under consideration in nine others.

Revenue

Kentucky enacted comprehensive education reform legislation to help alleviate some of the problems that plagued the state's public school system for generations. This act, more than 900 pages in length, is a response to a **Kentucky** Supreme Court ruling which declared the public school system to be unconstitutional in the case of *Rose vs. Council for Better Education, Inc.* The court ruled that the public school system was inequitable because of the disparity in per pupil expenditures among school districts, which ranged from $4,200 to $1,800 per year, thus violating the state constitution's requirement that **Kentucky** establish an efficient system of common schools. The education reform act

guarantees each district a base amount of $2,305 per pupil the first year.

The reform act increases the state's revenue by $1.3 billion per year by increasing the sales tax from 5 to 6 percent; conforming the state income tax code to the federal code; eliminating the deductability of federal income tax from state income tax; and increasing by 1 percent the corporate income tax. Most of the new revenue will be allocated for education reform.

The **Texas** General Assembly passed legislation calling for a 10 percent increase in education expenditures (approximately $500 million), along with various reforms aimed at improving the quality of education in the state. Separate legislation will increase the sales tax by a quarter-cent and raise taxes on tobacco and alcohol.

Less than a month after its school funding system was ruled unconstitutional, **New Jersey** adopted a $2.8 billion tax package, increasing the state sales tax by 1 percent, placing new taxes on alcohol and tobacco, and doubling personal income tax rates for the higher income brackets.

Other states are seeking to empower localities to raise revenues for education. For example, **Ohio** enacted a school district income tax measure in 1989 (SB 28) which will authorize school districts to impose income taxes on residents and on estates of decedents of each school district, provided they are approved by voters in a referendum. The proceeds for such a tax may be used for any one of a number of purposes, including current school expenses, the support of a public library and recreational expenses. Under SB 140, enacted in 1989, **Ohio** permitted local boards of education to submit a tax levy to the voters, provided that the purpose of the levy is for current school expenses and permanent improvements for special education and other specified education programs.

Another approach was adopted by **Tennessee** in its Volunteer Public Education Trust Fund Act of 1985 (Chapter 351). This measure authorizes the state treasurer to accept donations from any person, organization or corporation willing to contribute voluntarily to the trust fund. Interest income from the trust fund will be appropriated by the legislature for primary and secondary education as well as vocational education.

In **Oklahoma**, a statewide shutdown of the public school system led to a $230 million revenue package which increased some taxes and redistributed property tax receipts to reduce funding inequities among school districts (the wealthiest district spends four times as much per pupil as the poorest). Effective May 1, 1990, the sales tax was increased from 4 to 4.5 percent. Increases in personal income and corporate income taxes retroactive to January 1, 1990 also were enacted.

Financial Incentives

Some states have set up systems providing financial rewards to schools showing improvement in their students' performance. Under **Kentucky**'s school reform act, by the 1994-95 school year, the state board of education must establish a rewards program based on student per-

formance goals. An interim testing program will be in place until that time. Communications and mathematical skills, comprehension of science, social studies, arts and humanities, and problem-solving skills will be measured and taken into consideration. Schools are expected to increase attendance rates and reduce dropout rates.

The state's department of education will establish a method for determining cash rewards, which will go directly to the schools. School staff members will determine how the reward money will be spent. Schools failing to improve for two consecutive years will be declared "schools in crisis." In such cases, the state will assume control of the school through a "distinguished educator." Such schools also will be eligible for special state grants.

South Carolina's "Target 2000" act includes a competitive schoolwide innovation grants program. The act enables the state board of education to establish a competitive grants program with cash awards to schools wishing to implement exemplary programs designed to improve instruction. A separate competitive grants program to encourage public schools to implement innovative and comprehensive approaches for improving student development, performance and attendance also is mandated under the act. Reduction of student dropout rates or retention of low dropout rates, as well as exceptional or improved performance in higher order thinking and problem solving skills, are required to qualify for school incentive grants. Grant awards are funded under the annual state appropriation act and schools may receive a maximum award of $90,000 over a three-year period.

The **South Carolina** act also authorizes compensatory or remedial funding to school districts for students who score below the 25th percentile on standardized tests. This portion of the act pertains to all elementary and secondary students.

In **Kansas**, the 1989 legislature established the Education Excellence Program (Ch. 213), which will provide matching incentive grants for districts desiring to create at-risk pupil assistance plans. The program will enable schools to provide such services as remedial instruction, parental and work skills education, and guidance and counseling services. Proposals must include a description of the methods a district will employ to identify at-risk students, and an outline of the plan and evaluation process.

Financial incentives also may be given directly to teachers. **Oklahoma** increased minimum salary schedules for teachers, and allows school districts to develop teacher incentive pay plans. Districts will be *required* to establish such plans if 25 percent of the districts' teachers petition for it (HB 1017).

Governance

The **Kentucky** Education Reform Act makes a number of dramatic changes in the way the state's school system is governed. The act replaces the elected state superintendent of public instruction with an appointed

commissioner of education. At first, the new commissioner will be selected by a committee appointed by the governor and legislative leaders in 1991. The state board for elementary and secondary education will choose the commissioner thereafter. Commissioners will serve at the discretion of the board.

Perhaps the most significant changes will come in the area of local school politics. Teachers will be prohibited from working in school board election campaigns in order to protect them from political pressure. The measure also makes it illegal for any school board member to solicit contributions or campaign work from school employees. It will be illegal for school boards to influence hiring and firing of school employees, with the exception of the superintendent and school board attorney. School boards also will set general educational policy for their districts, but superintendents will hire school employees after consulting with local school councils (which will consist of two parents of pupils, three teachers and the principal). No one who has a relative working for the school district may serve on a local school board. This does not apply to current members whose relatives were hired before they were elected, but such members will not be able to run for re-election. Superintendents also will not be able to promote the relatives of school board members.

Many other state education acts do not restructure the educational governance structure as much as they enhance the powers of existing structures. For example, **Ohio**'s Education Accountability and Reform Act gives new powers to the state board of education to prescribe new curriculum standards, promote an open enrollment program, and develop a teaching internship certificate program. **Mississippi**'s school reform measure requires that local school board members and principals receive a minimum orientation and training exposure to strengthen their professional skills and to familiarize them with new ideas concerning school restructuring (HB 1523). The provision mandates a minimum of 12 hours of education and training through the education and training institute, as well as continuing education of eight hours per year.

APPENDIX H

AN ESSAY BY BOB ARNOLD, DIRECTOR OF THE SENATE'S SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE: "PROSPECTIVE IMPORTANCE OF A DECLARED PURPOSE OF EDUCATION" (REFLECTIONS ON THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSES OF EDUCATION ENACTED BY THE SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE)

PROSPECTIVE IMPORTANCE OF A DECLARED PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

by

Bob Arnold*

One of the little heralded provisions of the school improvement legislation enacted by the Alaska Legislature in 1990 is -- or can be -- one of the most important. It is important because in declaring what purpose lies behind the requirement that all children and youth attend school, it can be an exceedingly valuable stimulus to improving schools and student performance.

The legislated statement of purpose, which the Special Senate Committee developed on the basis of its hearings in 1987, was the Committee's attempt to describe what they believed parents aspire their children to increasingly become as they progress through school. The purpose of education in Alaska, in the words of the statute, "is to help ensure that all students will succeed in their education and work, shape worthwhile and satisfying lives for themselves, exemplify the best values of society, and be effective in improving the character and quality of the world about them."

If the foregoing words are seen simply as a preface to the other prescriptive provisions of the school improvement legislation, they will have but little effect on what schools do and how they do it, and certainly but little effect upon students. They will have consequences only as parents and students affirm such a purpose (or an adaptation of it) to be a reflection of their aspirations for their children, and require that their schools take steps to help them realize that purpose.

Whatever purpose adopted by a community must be a community's own. In my community, I think I would urge that the first element of the purpose be revised to read "become accomplished in ways important to themselves and their communities," because I think it says the same thing and more. If I were in northwest Alaska, I think I would urge that the third element be revised to read, "exemplify the best values and traditions of the Inupiaq and of humankind." And in any community, I think I would urge changing the fourth element to read "be effective in improving the character and quality of the world they share."

There is also a broader and more consequential revision that I would propose. As framed, the purpose describes attributes as though they

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might be judged at a single fixed moment in time. Since education is a continuing, lifelong process, and doesn't end when one leaves school, I think the statement of purpose might be recast to reflect that process, and thereby read as follows:

> The purpose of education in Alaska is to help ensure that all are:
>
> becoming accomplished in ways important to themselves and their communities,
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> shaping worthwhile and satisfying lives themselves,
>
> exemplifying the best values of humankind, and
>
> becoming increasingly effective in improving the character and quality of the world they share.

Once a community has agreed upon its statement of purpose consonant with the legislation, there are two sets of tasks it should undertake.

The first of these is to inaugurate a process of reviewing whatever list of goals it has adopted to determine whether the goals need to be modified to more nearly reflect the community's declared purpose. And it would mean, among other things, rethinking, the whole process of schooling as it is conducted. Although these are important tasks, they require little elaboration here.

The task -- which is my principal concern in this paper -- is for a community to use its statement of purpose to further motivate students to care about learning. Specifically, the community should require that each teacher begin each school year with an exploration with students of what each element of the purpose means to them, and, as a occasioned by what is being studied in a given class, to show connections with that purpose.

In this exploration, the students -- whatever their grade level -- will be asked, for instance, to describe what they believe to be the "best values" of their society. The chalkboard will soon be filled with values ranging from "punctuality" to "integrity." Being schoolchildren, whey will have learned repeatedly about the importance of punctuality (an important, but not profound value), but some will have never learned about the importance of integrity in a persons's life; they may not have ever even encountered the word.

Following the same pattern, the class would be summoned to reflect upon and amplify each of the elements of the community's declared purpose. Consideration of what kind of life is "worthwhile and satisfying" can be counted upon to be one of the most profitable and memorable discussions of the year. Consideration of the element, "becoming increasingly effective in improving the character and quality of the world they share," will likely lead some to conclude that it is a better formulation of the often-cited goal of being a "good

citizen" because, at the very least, it implies that one would study candidates and issues before voting and it implies that one would take newspapers, bottles, and cans to a recycling center: beyond that, however, it also encourages the citizen to participate actively in organizations, join in political campaigns, or run for office.

Incidentally, I hope it goes without saying that these discussions should not result in a list that students would agree to subscribe to in some formalized way. If I were the teacher, I would encourage students to write down only those values, attributes, or behaviors they individually seek for themselves.

Perhaps as important as the classroom discussions will be what takes place the night before: conversations between students and their parents. The homework assigned will have been to ask their parents for their views on the four-part purpose to be discussed on the following day.

The burden on the teacher is principally one of question-askers (and perhaps chalkboard recorder) in these explorations. Once they are done, there is another burden: to show the connections between what he or she is teaching and the community's declared purpose. This should be done not just at the beginning of the course, but with whatever frequency is required to make connections between that purpose and what is being taken up in the course.

These kinds of explorations and connections can do much to motivate students to care about learning by providing them a framework that gives meaning to a wide range of learning. They will continue to care about some courses more than others, but the whole enterprise of going to school will take on a kind of meaning it never had before. If schools are only preparation for jobs, well, one can always get some kind of job, even without much of a record of achievement in school. But if the purpose is larger and grandeur -- becoming more fully human day by day -- let us be explicit that it is, and not keep to ourselves our dreams for kinds of lives we want our children to lead.

Isn't it time we told our children and youth what we think schools are for and to make sure our schools are animated by that purpose? We'll perhaps learn that our perspectives are not all that different. And we just might be witness to the powerful, motivating role of ideas in young lives.

New Directives in School Performance:

The Legislature as Advocate and Guarantor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE
ON
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

To The
Seventeenth Alaska Legislature

JUNEAU, ALASKA
JANUARY 1991

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NEW DIRECTIVES IN SCHOOL PERFORMANCE:

THE LEGISLATURE AS ADVOCATE AND GUARANTOR

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

TO THE

SEVENTEENTH ALASKA LEGISLATURE

JUNEAU, ALASKA

JANUARY 1991

Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition to the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for late professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION, 1954

INTRODUCTION

When established by the Sixteenth Legislature, the Joint Committee on School Performance was charged with identifying causes of inadequate school performance and recommending ways to overcome them. As reported in the body of its second report, the Committee has accomplished this task. It has not been the purpose of the Committee to seek an indictment of school personnel or schools in general; in some locations exceptionally effective school programs and teachers are to be found. It is undeniable, however, that in many instances school performance is far from what it eventually must be. Whether due to problems in society as a whole or with Alaska's system of public education, there are conspicuous and critical failings in elementary and secondary education in Alaska. Although the legislature has wisely delegated much of its policy-making authority to school districts, the legislature remains ultimately responsible for failings in the system because of its constitutional mandate to maintain public schools in Alaska. In this role the legislature must seek to alleviate widespread shortcomings.

NEEDS IDENTIFIED

Drawing on material in this and the Committee's first report, the Committee has concluded that shortcomings in school performance may be attributed to the following deficiencies, all of which require immediate attention:

1. The need for stricter school district accountability through more closely monitored school operations by the legislature.

2. The need to encourage greater local participation in school affairs at the community or building level.

3. The need to insist on better coordinated health, social service, and educational agencies as a means to remove barriers to learning among disadvantaged youth.

4. The need to strengthen readiness to learn among pre-school children.

5. The need to raise and distribute funds for school districts more equitably among all regions and political subdivisions of the state.

6. The need to achieve balanced equality of opportunity among all students.

7. The need to redraw some school district boundaries in a way that will make districts more operationally efficient, more cost effective, and more receptive to constituent needs.

8. The need to strengthen professional development in the teaching profession.

9. The need for all students to be better informed about the political and natural history of Alaska, the cultural heritage of all its people, and its economic potential.

10. The need to better understand processes of schooling in Alaska, such as why some pupils succeed where others do not, why some programs of instruction work well while others do not,

and how information about successful programs can be disseminated more effectively.

It is not just coincidental that some of the observations made by the Joint Committee in arriving at these needs correspond to those of similarly constituted groups in other states. Many states, either through their legislatures or governors' offices, have undertaken school performance improvement or school system restructuring programs in recent years. The movement for improved school performance is national in scope; many problems relating to school performance identified elsewhere are present in Alaska. Others, some of the most severe, are uniquely Alaskan and are in part the causes of the incongruous gap in performance between poorly performing students, many of whom are in isolated rural villages, and adequately performing students.

RECOMMENDATIONS REVIEWED

In response to the Joint Committee's findings and as the means that will enable the legislature to eliminate or reduce some of the deficiencies the Committee has identified, several recommendations in this and the Committee's first report have been made. To deal with other needs, the Committee has raised several questions about the condition of Alaska's system of public schools that first must be answered before additional recommendations can be made. In either case, the legislature needs to advocate and guarantee changes that will lead to new directives in school performance. The Joint Committee has recommended changes that it believes are preconditions to most improvements in school performance

School District Accountability [Pages 8 - 12]

The need for stricter school district accountability was well established by the Alaska Senate through the work of its Special Committee on School Performance in 1988 and the Joint Committee on School Performance in 1989 and 1990. Acting on a recommendation of the Joint Committee, the legislature passed HB 469 in 1990 (now codified as Chapter 173) establishing the purposes, expected outcomes, and goals of schooling. Furthermore, Chapter 173 requires school districts to be held accountable for the authority delegated to them by requiring an annual "report card" on school performance to the public and the legislature. The state Department of Education is currently developing procedures, in cooperation with school districts, the public, and the education profession in general, that will enable the process to be carried out promptly and uniformly. (As a means to underscore the significance of this legislation, Bob Arnold former staff director of the Senate's Special Committee on School Performance, has summarized in essay form his reflections on the legislature's declared purposes of schooling since enactment of Chapter 173. His essay is attached as Appendix H.)

Incentive Grants and Local Participation
[Pages 13 - 16] *

The need to encourage greater local participation in school improvement was addressed in HB 469 with passage of a clause in the bill that established the Fund for the Improvement of School Performance, but failed to appropriate funds to activate the program. The governing body of a school district, district advisory board or nonprofit community organization, or a teacher or principal

*Page numbers accompanying each recommendation refer to the place where detailed information on each topic may be found in the body of the report.

employed by a school in the state, may apply for a grant to improve school performance by submitting an application to the commissioner of education. Without an appropriation creation of the fund serves no purpose. Therefore, the Committee recommends

> that no less than $3,000,000 be appropriated annually to the Fund for the Improvement of School Performance over the next five years.

Health and Family Services Programs

[Pages 16-17]

The Committee recognized that not all causes of inadequate school performance can be attributed to problems in the school system. Thus, the Committee has identified the need for better coordinated health and family-related service programs, for the complexity of the need for change involves social, health, and poverty-related problems. To address these in a coordinated way, the legislature enacted HCR 46 in response to a recommendation in the Committee's first report. That resolution called on the executive branch of government to create a committee of cognizant department heads to develop a plan that will enable their departments to better serve the needs of disadvantaged and "at risk" students through coordinated deployment of resources. The governor is presently examining ways this resolution can be implemented.

To underscore the sense of importance the Committee gives to this subject, it recommends:

that a resolution calling for better coordinated services among the departments of health and social services, labor, community and regional affairs, and education, similar to the resolution calling for this effort passed by the 16th Legislature, be enacted by the 17th Legislature.

Early Childhood and Parenting Education

[Pages 17-21]

The need for enhanced early childhood education is consistent with testimony from every corner of the state, urban and rural. Among fundamental causes that deny children the means or motivation necessary to succeed at schooling are inadequate or insufficient early childhood and parenting education. In recognition of this reality the legislature has increased appropriations for early childhood education as has the federal government. There remain, however, many unanswered questions on the nature of early childhood education and how programs should be delivered, answers to which will determine the eventual make-up of Alaska's early childhood programs.

Therefore, as was stated in its first report the Committee recommends:

that the legislature, by resolution, establish a Committee to address the issues and questions on early childhood education that pertain to the education of Alaska's young children, with particular attention given to those children with environmental handicaps. Included among the Committee's responsibility shall be the development of a plan for a statewide program of early childhood education and preparation of a report on its findings with recommendations to the legislature no later than May, 1992.

School Finance and Governance [Pages 29-84]

Of all the needs identified by the Joint Committee, the need for a redesigned system of school governance and finance is the most complex. Because this subject addresses so many important problem areas (the need for tax liability equity among districts, equitable distribution of state funds for school purposes, and equitable decision making authority among all Alaska communities), meeting it may hold the greatest promise of all the Committee's recommendations. The Committee recommends:

> *that the legislature, in recognition of the urgency of the need for improved school performance, initiate a thorough investigation of the school finance and governance systems of Alaska public education. It is further recommended that this work be conducted as a legislative "in-house study" (utilizing the resources of the Department of Education when required) and that it be carried out under the auspices of a newly created joint committee on school performance (as recommended in Chapter Three). The study shall include answers to the questions posed in the body of this report (pages 46-47 and 61-64) and propose a system of governance and a financial foundation formula in agreement with the findings. The committee shall report its findings and make its proposals no later than January 1993.*

Professional Development of School Personnel

[Pages 84 - 104]

Much of the education reform movement during the past decade has focused on improving the quality of teacher performance through improved professional development.

Although it is recognized that the aggregate of Alaska's current teaching force is among the best trained and competent in the nation, this position is at risk. Teacher shortages, primarily in rural schools where recently there has been an annual teacher turnover rate of 30%, have made it necessary to recruit teachers who do not have the background necessary to succeed under the demanding conditions found in many Alaska schools. The means to develop, recruit, and retain an adequate teacher force, both in numbers and ability, need to be expanded and enhanced. Therefore, in the matter of teacher education and training, it is recommended:

1. that a BA or BS degree in a subject matter discipline be a prerequisite for admission to a professional teacher education program at all campuses of the University of Alaska.

2. that teacher training programs that prepare new teachers and upgrade in-service teachers for assignment in village schools be standard offerings of the University of Alaska system and routinely available as a means to qualify candidates for teacher certificate endorsements appropriate to recommendation number 3 under certification below (pertaining to village teaching).

3. that the University of Alaska prepare detailed estimates of the funding that will be required to carry out the prior two recommendations, to be made available to the legislature no later than January 15, 1992.

In the matter of teacher certification, it is recommended:

1. that legislation be enacted relating to requirements for limited teacher certificates for the purpose of providing teachers in certain limited fields where baccalaureate degree training is not sufficiently available, so long as the person demonstrates both subject matter expertise and teaching competency.

2. that the legislature, by resolution, instruct the state board of education to investigate the feasibility and desirability of setting into place alternative certification routes for candidates entering teaching from other fields not covered in recommendation number 1 under this heading.

3. that the legislature, by resolution, urge the state board of education to adopt a tiered system of certification that distinguishes between competencies necessary to teach in rural, multicultural communities (Alaska villages) and traditional, urban teaching assignments.

In the matter of tenure, it is recommended:

that the existing tenure law be changed. Sec. 14.20.150 (2) presently requires teachers to be "employed as a teacher in the same district continuously for <u>two</u> full school years and is reemployed for the school year immediately following the two full years." The Committee proposes the following alteration: "employed as a teacher in the same district continuously for five full school years and is reemployed for the school year immediately following the <u>five</u> full years."

Program Definition and Curricula

[Pages 104 - 108]

Strengthened curricula and innovative programs of instruction can be among the most promising components of the school improvement movement. Historically it has been the practice of the Alaska legislature to defer decisions affecting curricula and programs of instruction to others. Nevertheless, and although the Committee subscribes to the principle of delegating matters of curriculum to the state board and local districts, because a critical need is not being met, Alaska studies is an exception to this doctrine. There is a critical need for all Alaskans to be well informed about Alaska's history, system of government, geography and natural resources, and the richness of its multiculturally diverse population.

Therefore, it is recommended:

> that the legislature, by statute, require that the scope and sequence schedule developed by the state Department of Education in its Alaska studies program be incorporated into the curriculum of each school district of the state.

Research, Evaluation, and Dissemination

[Pages 109 - 112]

As the Committee collected background material for this report, the need to better understand processes of schooling in Alaska became clear. There is a need for long-range, ongoing studies that will provide the state with background materials and knowledge of options that are necessary to meet goals of education. What little research is carried out by Alaska institutions is usually initiated only by inspired individual investigators. Current capabilities of Alaska institutions of higher education and the Department of

Education to fulfill Alaska's educational research needs are being questioned. The issue is not whether there is a need for educational research; the issue is whether there is the capability and commitment at Alaska's research institutions to carry it out.

Efforts at the University of Alaska to develop a coordinated, sustained, institutional educational research presence with its recently established Alaska Schools Research Fund have created the potential to meet most research needs

that this report speaks to as well as many others.

Therefore, the Committee recommends:

> *that the legislature support the University's "Alaska School Research Fund" as it has the potential to enable Alaska's research capability to become sufficient to meet the state's educational research needs. Furthermore, it recommends pursuing research on subjects suggested in this report and others that may be suggested, especially those that seek the means to ameliorate causes of inadequate school performance.*

This summary leads to the Joint Committee's final recommendation. There is need for the legislature to continue to give extraordinary attention to school performance. Arguments advanced in favor of creating the Joint Committee two years ago remain valid. Some of the Committee's recommendations already acted upon require continuing legislative oversight. And as measures to meet needs identified in this report are developed, they should be monitored by the legislature to guarantee that they are

carried out correctly and promptly. In particular, the study of the state's school finance and governance system recommended by the Committee in Chapter Two should be accomplished under the auspices of the legislature. Therefore the Committee recommends:

> *that the 17th Alaska Legislature establish a House-Senate Joint Committee on School Improvement. The Committee shall continue the work of the Joint Committee on School Performance, make additional recommendations as conditions warrant, and oversee all of the legislature's initiatives in school improvement.*

CONCLUSION

Although there have been efforts at school reform over the past several years that failed because they were ill founded or inadequately carried out, it would be a mistake to dismiss current arguments for reform as lacking in substance or to doubt that there is genuine need. Two compelling reasons support this statement and the presumption that there is need to act on the Committee's recommendations definitively and promptly. First, the number of students who drop out of school or finish school unable to fill out a job application form let alone qualify for any kind of employment grows increasingly higher each year. As many as one out of every three students presently enrolled is experiencing social, economic, or academic distress. Complicating these conditions is the reality that these students are not uniformly distributed among the state's fifty-four school districts. There are concentrations of students (often in small, remote villages) where 60% to 70% of the school-age population benefits little from Alaska's education system. These children do not progress toward but rather retreat from requirements of contemporary society. Because they are scattered over such a

large geographic area, the critical nature of their deficiencies is not apparent. Consequently, they attract far less public awareness and concern than is usually necessary to activate calls for remedial measures. Nevertheless, these children are there, their need is great, and their numbers are growing.

Second, the level of education necessary to succeed in Alaska's (and the nation's) increasingly technological and educationally demanding society is much higher than ever before. There are more youth falling out of the system who are unable to cope academically or socially at any level than ever before, while at the same time the need to complete a solid basic education as a pre-condition merely to survive economically steadily increases. In the first report of the Joint Committee, quoting Lisbeth Shore from her book, *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*, the point was made that "In today's world, a youngster who leaves school unable to read, write, and do simple arithmetic faces a bleak future. When a substantial proportion of boys and girls leave school uneducated, the rest of us face a bleak future."

Guided by the assumption that all children and youth are able to learn and that the state as well as individual students will profit from their learning, the Committee is convinced that Alaska need not face a bleak future -- *if education is given the priority it requires.* It follows, therefore, that the financial and intellectual resources of the state must be made equally available to all children. The real proof of the legislature's success in advocating and guaranteeing improved school performance will be seen when all students achieve levels of performance commensurate with their abilities regardless of their ethnicity, their gender, their economic circumstance, or their place of residence.

I HAVE LIVED IN THIS VILLAGE ALL MY LIFE AND NEVER WENT TO SCHOOL. I SPEAK ONLY MY NATIVE LANGUAGE. WHY IS IT THAT THE KIDS WHO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL DO NOT KNOW ANY MORE THAN I DO?

TUNUNUK VILLAGE ELDER
SEPTEMBER, 1989